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ABSTRACT

This report uses the case of Ponam Island to show the sorts of social and economic factors that have influenced one village's response to schooling. These factors appear to have been important in affecting the relative success of educational programs in Ponam. Findings suggest that researchers and policy makers concerned with education need to pay attention to the ways villagers respond to formal education. The first section constitutes a discussion of the changes in the economic position of Ponam Island, and Manus more generally, brought about by colonization and the current economic position of Ponam itself. It is shown that important influences on Ponam's relationship to schooling are broad social and economic forces. In the second section, the author looks at the beliefs, practices, and values of Ponam society and the ways these shape and reflect islanders' response to education. Islanders see no conflict of importance between the reasons for success in school and the reasons for success in village life. Ponam's use of the sorts of practical knowledge and skills which might be taught in a more vocationally oriented curriculum shows that in attempts at village improvement or development through education, consideration needs to be given not just to the sorts of skills that villagers would have to acquire to improve their lives, but also to the social factors affecting the use of those skills. A 69-item bibliography is included. (JB)

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EDUCATION AND SOCIETY IN A MANUS VILLAGE

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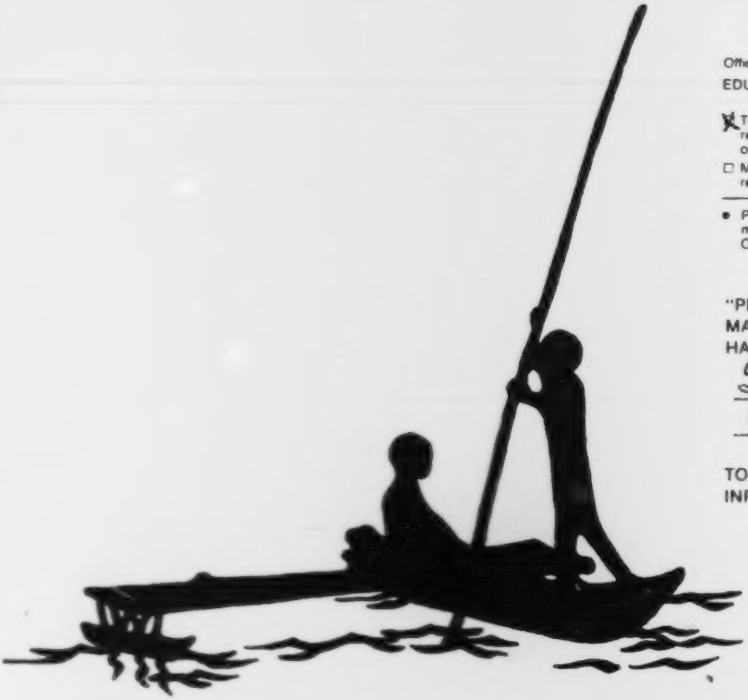

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ABSTRACT

This report uses the case of Ponam Island to show the sorts of social and economic factors which have influenced one village's response to schooling. These factors appear to have been important in affecting the relative success of educational programs in Ponam. Findings suggest that researchers and policy makers concerned with education need to pay attention to the ways villagers respond to formal education.

The first main section constitutes a discussion of the changes in the economic position of Ponam Island, and Manus more generally, brought about by colonisation and the current economic position of Ponam itself. As is shown the important influences on Ponam's relationship to schooling are broad social and economic forces, particularly the relationship between formal education and employment, rather than curricula and the organisation of the school system.

In the second main section of this report, the author looks at the beliefs, practices and values of Ponam Society and the ways these shape and reflect islanders' response to education. Islanders see no conflict of importance between the reasons for success in school and the reasons for success in village life. This means that they accept schooling more readily than those societies where such conflicts exist. Ponam's use of the sorts of practical knowledge and skills which might be taught in a more vocationally - or community - oriented curriculum shows that in attempts at village improvement or development through education consideration needs to be given not just to the sorts of skills which villagers would have to acquire to improve their lives, but also to the social factors affecting the use of those skills.

ERU REPORT NO. 47

EDUCATION AND SOCIETY IN A MANUS VILLAGE

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PREFACE

This Research Report brings together a great deal of the work I have done on schooling and its relationship to the society and economy of Ponam Island, in Manus Province. I wanted to bring this material together for a number of reasons. For one thing, I think it will be useful for researchers interested in the anthropology and sociology of education in Papua New Guinea to have at hand an extended case study, which is what this report constitutes.

The more substantial reason for preparing this report, however, is rather different. As I point out in the introductory chapter, I think the study of education (a word I use in preference to both the slightly misleading 'schooling' and the ponderous 'formal education') in Papua New Guinea seems blind to what I think is an extremely important aspect of education: the relationship of education with its host society. This blindness is not, I should add, peculiar to education research. Anthropologists too in this country generally have been unwilling to pay much attention to education, perhaps feeling that it is not of sufficient anthropological moment to merit serious attention. On the other hand, they might have been put off by exposure to what is now often called the anthropology of education, much of which consists of not much more than observations of classroom behaviour. Fortuitously, my own doctoral training in sociology led me to read in the sociology of education, particularly the relationship between social structure, educational performance, and the way members of a society account for educational success and failure. Thus I was fortunate, as it turned out, to be able to approach Ponam Island and education with a sociologist's predelictions and prejudices.

In any event, my main purpose in preparing this report has been to present what I hope is the beginnings of a real anthropology or sociology of education in Papua New Guinea, by which I mean a study which places education in the context of the society in which it exists. This view omits a number of approaches to the study of education and society. The most important of these are the study of what goes on in classrooms, and the structure and operation of the educational institutions in the country. In omitting these I am not arguing that they are unimportant to the study of education in Papua New Guinea. However, I do think that given the current state of the field in these areas, their utility is limited. At least at present, the ways these sorts of studies are carried out, and the sorts of findings they produce, result in reports that are of technical interest to academics themselves and educational administrators, but of little relevance beyond this narrow range. This is true of many of the studies carried out both in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. And it is true because these studies generally ignore the larger society, the environment in which education exists.

Education is, after all, more than a bureaucracy, teachers, and pupils. It is an institution in society, shaping the society in which it exists and being shaped by that society in turn. What goes on outside of the classroom and the administrative bureaucracy, exerts both a tremendous influence upon the education system itself, and on the ways parents and children think about, deal with, and make use of the education which the schools offer.

I approach the social nature of education and Ponam society in slightly different ways in the two main sections of this report. In the first I describe what Ponam society and economy are like today, and what I have been able to discover about how the current state of affairs came about. As this section will show, Ponam Islanders, like Manus people more generally, are very well educated, and need to be so, for to a remarkable degree they are dependent upon paid employment. Briefly, for a number of reasons having largely to do with colonisation, neither Ponam nor Manus is self-sufficient. Instead, each relies on remittances from migrant workers for survival. This reliance is facilitated by the extended education people there receive, which in turn gains them relatively privileged entry to the labour market, and pay packets sufficiently large that remittances are not a significant burden. In other words, Ponam Island's economic prosperity, such as it is, depends upon access to education and the fruits that educated migrants can provide.

This basic fact about education and Ponam society, illustrates my argument that education needs to be seen as an institution in society which interacts with the society. Ponam children all go to school regularly and work hard at their lessons. And Ponam parents encourage this in their children, and willingly make the sacrifices required to send their children to school. But they do not do so only because the schools are organised in certain ways and teach certain things. Rather, they do so because of the web of social and economic relations of which the school is a part. They do so because of what an education does, what it allows children to do in the larger socio-economic system. Parents and children are concerned with the socio-economic consequences of education, rather than with its curriculum, classroom practices, and internal organisation.

The first main section of this report, then, is an extended discussion of the way that education fits with Ponam's socio-economic system and situation.

The second main section addresses a number of aspects of a different question: What are Ponam beliefs and social practices in relation to education? Thus, even though this second section is concerned with education and society, it differs from the first section in an important way. The first section was concerned with how education shaped and was shaped by what one can identify as the objective socio-economic situation of Ponam society, particularly the relationship between Ponam society as a whole and the larger world of which it is a part. On the other hand, the second section of this report looks within Ponam society itself, to show some of the ways that the internal operations of the society affect the ways that islanders think about and treat education, and thus indirectly the ways that education can affect islanders' lives. This section is second, rather than first, because a proper understanding of the internal operations of Ponam society is possible only if one already has some understanding of what I discuss in the first section of this report, the objective situation in which Ponam society, and thus Ponam Islanders, exist.

The second section has chapters discussing three aspects of the ways Ponam beliefs and social practices affect education on the island. The first, reflecting my major interest in the sociology of education, deals with how islanders account for educational success and failure. Inevitably this obliges me to discuss Ponam beliefs and ideologies, areas which someone from an alien culture finds more difficult to approach than the social practices with which the rest of this report deals. This chapter has two purposes. One is to describe how Ponams understand success and failure will affect the decisions they make about education. Second, this discussion illustrates an important point which is not always obvious. Even though islanders do not have the understanding of success and failure that educational psychologists may have, their understanding of these things is not just an accidental muddle that can be dismissed as a meaningless error, correctable simply by providing islanders with more of the knowledge that educational psychologists have. Rather, islanders' understanding of educational success and failure is a rational, coherent understanding, consistent with and understandable in terms of the ways they explain other aspects of human success and failure in daily life. While it may be reasonable to say that their subsequent understanding of educational success and failure is wrong, in the sense that it may not be what school administrators believe, it is not reasonable to say that it is senseless. On the contrary, it is quite sensible once it is approached from the Ponam point of view.

The second purpose of this chapter is somewhat different. Though it may be unfortunate, nonetheless many people concerned with education in Papua New Guinea and countries like it take a Westerner's approach, seeing villagers as 'wild' groups of people who have to be tamed, explained in terms of familiar (that is, Western) ideas and made to conform with those ideas. Although I have said this is a Westerner's approach, it is not limited to Westerners, but is common to people who must deal with a strange group or society. My second purpose in this chapter is to show that this approach works in both directions, so to speak. Just as the Westerner or other stranger sees Ponams as wild people who have to be tamed, so Ponams see new, Western-based institutions like their local schools as wild institutions which have to tamed: explained or made sense of in familiar terms.

The final chapter in this section uses Ponam data to address a question of educational policy, and so in some sense is the most immediately practical part of this report. While the other sections of this report reflect my concern to try to understand Ponam Islanders and their relationship to education, this chapter arose out of my unease about some of the presuppositions, as I saw them, of the Secondary Schools Community Extension Project (SSCEP) in particular, and more generally with what is called variously relevance education, development education, and community education. The presuppositions which bothered me reflect, I think, a sociologically naive view of how the form and content of education relate to village life, a point I have made already in this preface. As I point out in this chapter, relevance education ignores how social factors affect the transfer of knowledge, especially practical knowledge in this case, from the school to the community. Ponam is a particularly telling example of this problem, for resident islanders, not to mention those who come home on leave, possess a tremendous range of practical skills, learnt in school or special training courses or on the job. Thus Ponam presents already the goal that relevance education tries to achieve: the injection of new useful knowledge into the community. However, islanders make almost no use of this knowledge, even though they recognise its utility and genuinely want to improve the quality of island life. As I show in this last chapter, there are strong social forces which inhibit the use of this knowledge, forces which reflect the fundamental aspects of island life which Ponams like and want to preserve.

The main question this last chapter addresses, then, is one which appears in different ways throughout the report. It is the question of how social scientists, policy makers, and administrators ought to approach societies in Papua New Guinea. Like many policies and projects affecting villagers in this country, education for development, which is one of the things SSCEP is supposed to be, fails to take into account the existing position and practices of the people the projects are supposed to affect. In particular, development education in this country generally looks at what people fail to do (that is: develop economically in the ways policy makers think appropriate). What is important is that they do this instead of looking at what people in villages in fact are doing, and trying to understand why they are doing it. Ponam illustrates an important point. Growth in local production and the improvement of standards of living are not being held back by the absence of practical knowledge and the desire to use it. Their failure to develop, then, is not the result of ignorance or lack of motivation. Rather, the application of practical knowledge on Ponam is held back for the very good reason that it would conflict with other social practices and values.

The point of the last chapter, then, the point of this entire report in fact, is this: To understand, and hence guide, education, economic activity, and the other aspects of village life in this country, it is not enough to look at or plan things in isolation. To understand education in this country one must look beyond education itself to the societies in which it exists. To plan education one must recognise that changes in educational outcomes are affected not just by changes in what goes on in the schools, or in the ways they are organised. Rather, one must look at these changes in relation to the societies in which the schools exist. Likewise, to understand economic activity in this country one must look to the societies in which economic activity exists, and to plan economic development one must understand how social forces influence the production and distribution of goods. Although the task may be difficult, it seems necessary to understand the societies of Papua New Guinea if we want to understand how the institutions in the country operate and can be made to change and, more important, to produce the changes in society that governments are elected to carry out.

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Several people have been helpful in various stages of the preparation of this report. First is David Lancy, formerly Principal Research Officer of the National Department of Education, who encouraged me to study education on Ponam Island. Second is Sheldon Weeks, of the Educational Research Unit of the University of Papua New Guinea, who first put the idea of this report in my head and consistently encouraged me to write it. Third is Professor Maev O'Collins, of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the University of Papua New Guinea, who helped arrange the time and support which allowed the final revisions of this report to be carried out. Achsah Carrier has been helpful at every stage of research and writing. Specific parts of the report have benefitted from conversations and correspondence with: Amy Burce, Don Burkins, Jill Grant, Lisette Josephides, Peter Lawrence, Louise Morauta, Ali Pomponio, Marc Schiltz, Andrew Strathern, and Marty Zeleietz. Financial support for the initial fieldwork (November 1978 - December 1979) came from the Research Committee of the Papua New Guinea Ministry of Education and from the University of London Central Research Fund. Subsequent briefer trips to Ponam in 1980 and 1981 were supported by the Research Committee of the University of Papua New Guinea. And of course I owe thanks to the governments of Papua New Guinea and Manus Province for permission to carry out this research, and to Ponam Islanders for their patience and good humour.

Most of the chapters of this report are revisions of papers which have appeared elsewhere. Chapter 1, the Introduction, is a modified version of Carrier (1983), Chapter 2 is based on Carrier and Carrier (1981), Chapter 3 is a revision of Carrier (1981), Chapter 4 is a revision of Carrier (1982), and Chapter 5 is based on Carrier (1980).

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

THE SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF EDUCATION IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

I said in the Preface to this report that relatively little research has been done in Papua New Guinea on the relationship between education (which, remember, I take to mean formal schooling) and the society in which it takes place. What is surprising, in fact, is how little sociological work of any sort is done on education. In this introductory chapter I want to demonstrate this point, for I think it is worth establishing in some detail.

In the first part of this chapter I present the results of a review, admittedly limited, of research on education in this country. I have three closely related purposes for this. These are: (1) simply to show what sorts of educational research have been done in the past, (2) to show how researcher interests have changed over the years, and (3) to see what sorts of research have not been pursued. Obviously, a detailed analysis of all the educational research done in this country is the topic for a lengthy monograph, not a brief introductory chapter. Thus, I shall restrict myself to one source of research publications (which I explain later) and one sort of research: sociological and anthropological research on formal education. For purposes of brevity I shall refer to these collectively as sociological studies of education.

One of my reasons for this exercise is to point up the neglect of a sort of sociological research which is extremely important: studies of education from the point of view of village societies in this country. This area is, it seems, a disciplinary orphan. Generally it is ignored by anthropologists, who appear to form the bulk of social science researchers in Papua New Guinea. Probably this is because most of them are, for quite understandable reasons, disposed to see schools as an introduction to the societies they study, hence lacking authenticity, and peripheral to the cultures and societies which are their main interests. For in spite of a growing awareness of the impact of modern institutions and events on societies in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere in the Third World, most anthropologists seem to focus on the internal workings of villages, and on what can be called the more traditional aspects of village life. This is what is generally expected of them by their professional colleagues, and what is presented to students in the classic anthropological works they read and discuss as part of their training.

On the other hand, those whose prime interest is education, rather than anthropology, are more concerned with the operation, success, or failure of the school itself, doubtless for equally understandable reasons. They seem to see the surrounding society primarily as a poorly defined contextual factor which affects the school's operation, but as little more than this. These researchers are, I suspect, unwilling to do the fairly extensive fieldwork that anthropologists undertake, for rewards which seem doubtful to them, and they are not sufficiently grounded in Melanesian ethnography to make use of the knowledge already available in order to guide their research.

However understandable this state of affairs may be, it is unfortunate. As I shall argue in this chapter, it means that education researchers and planners have been unable to see how societies in Papua New Guinea understand, use, and adopt to formal schooling; processes which guide village responses to education activities, and which thus help determine whether schools and education-related policies achieve their goals.

In spite of my assertion about the general neglect of this sort of research, it is the case that recently the Department of Education and the Educational Research Unit at the University of Papua New Guinea have sponsored some anthropologists to do village studies, though few of them have been back from their fieldwork long enough to be able to prepare and publish their findings. I hope that what they do write will command general attention and lay the basis for further village studies and comparative research.

I said that I have restricted myself to one source of research findings. This is the **Papua New Guinea Journal of Education** (PNGJE), whose long publication history and extensive number of titles published make it better suited to my purpose than the other obvious source, the research reports of the university's Educational Research Unit.

EDUCATION RESEARCH IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

My discussion is based on a survey of the entire stock of articles, 340 in all, published by the PNGJE from its establishment in 1961, as the **South Pacific Journal of Education,** to the most recent (as of September, 1982, when I prepared the survey on which this chapter was based) published issue, Volume 16, Number 2, dated October 1980. My findings are based on article counts for various sorts of research. (For those who are interested, analysis of page counts does not yield substantially different results.) Initially, I identified all articles which broadly can be classed as sociological studies of education. (Remember this includes anthropological research). Classification of articles is not always a simple matter. Here, generally I decided to exclude articles which contained some sociological findings, if their primary concern was not sociological. Also I excluded almost all of the articles which concerned themselves primarily with cognitive psychology or with standardised achievement testing, though some of these papers could be considered part of cognitive anthropology. As this may show, to some degree the decision of whether or not a given article should be considered sociological is an arbitrary one, relying on personal judgement rather than on some agreed-upon objective measure. Although this arbitrariness may affect the number of articles in each category to some degree, it is not likely to affect either the relative size of the categories or the ways they change over time.

For ease of presentation I have divided the journal's twenty-year history of publication into ten periods of two years each. This helps smooth out minor, brief fluctuations, and for most two-year periods it produces a number of titles which is large enough to justify the use of percentages, thus simplifying the presentation greatly. This does, however, cause a few significant distortions, which I discuss when they arise.

Table 1 Sociological articles in the PNGJE

Years	Volumes	Total (N)	Sociology (%)
1961-62	1	30	0
1963-64	1,2	20	0
1965-66	3,4	31	6.5
1967-68	5	49	4.1
1969-70	6	44	13.6
1971-72	7,8	52	25.0
1973-74	9,10	45	28.9
1975-76	11,12	27	29.6
1977-78	13,14	20	55.0
1979-80	15,16	22	59.1
TOTAL	1-16	340	19.7%

Table 1 presents the number of articles published for each of these periods and the percentage of articles in each period which are sociological. The table shows both the changing fortunes of the journal, and the increasing importance of sociology. Put simply, there were very few sociological articles through the 1960s. In the early 1970s a bit over a quarter of the articles were sociological, and from 1977 to 1980 over half were sociological. Thus, particularly since the period 1969-70, there has been a marked shift in orientation in PNGJE articles, towards a concern with sociological questions and research.

But not all sociological articles are alike. As I pointed out in the preface to this report, many sociological studies of education fail to address the question I am concerned with here: the relationship between education and the society in which it exists. Rather, as I shall show, in fact few articles deal with this topic. To show this, I arranged the sociological articles according to the particular sociological questions they address. This arrangement produced seven substantive and one miscellaneous heading. Table 2 shows what these various headings are, and what percentage of the articles in each two-year period were of these different sorts. (In an appendix to this chapter I list for each category the author, year, volume number and issue number of the articles which fall into it.)

Table 2 Varieties of sociological articles in the PNGJE

		CATEGORIES								
Years	Articles	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	Total*
1961-62	30	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1963-64	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1965-66	31	6.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6.5
1967-68	49	4.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.1
1969-70	44	4.5	4.5	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	13.6
1971-72	52	1.9	3.8	1.9	3.8	3.8	5.8	3.8	0	25.0
1973-74	45	2.2	4.4	2.2	4.4	0	6.7	4.4	4.4	28.9
1975-76	27	3.7	7.4	3.7	0	7.4	3.7	3.7	0	29.6
1977-78	20	30.0	10.0	0	5.0	0	0	5.0	5.0	55.0
1979-80	22	4.5	0	18.2	13.6	13.6	0	4.5	4.5	59.1
Total	340	4.7	2.9	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.2	19.7

* Because of rounding, the figures in the column may not equal the sum of the individual category percents making them up.

Category keys:

I: Socio-cultural
II: Student attitudes
III: Student demographics
IV: Professional studies
V: Interaction of school and society
VI: School-leaver studies
VII: External debates and studies
VIII: Miscellaneous

I need to explain each of the categories used in Table 2 in some detail.

I. The first category I have listed consists of socio-cultural studies of Papua New Guinea societies, paying attention to how the village society or culture does, may, or should affect education, especially pupil performance. Thus, this is concerned with the effect of the village on the school's task, not on the relationship or interaction of the school and the society. This is the most frequent category and the first to appear. There are 16 titles in this category, substantially more than other substantive categories, which have between seven and ten articles in them.

II. The second category is student attitude studies. These are surveys of secondary and tertiary students on social and political attitudes, motives for schooling, and occupational ranking tests, among other things.

III. The third category is student demographic studies. These report research on take-up, drop-out, and attrition rates of cohorts of pupils, sex ratios in different schools, and the like.

IV. The fourth category is professional studies. These are studies pertinent to the internal workings of the educational system, and include surveys of trainee teachers, perceptions of the roles of various officials in the school system and educational bureaucracy, and attitudes toward curricula.

V. The fifth category is studies of the interaction of school and society. These differ from the first category in that they do not focus on the student's knowledge, beliefs, or values as real or potential influences on educational success. Rather, they look at how the school and educational practices do or do not fit with village social structure and practices. I will return to this category later.

VI. The sixth category is studies of school leavers.

VII. The seventh category is made of articles presenting or discussing intellectual debates or case studies outside of Papua New Guinea which were thought to be important for those concerned with education within the country.

VIII. The eighth category is a miscellany. The smallest category, it consists of articles which do not fit reasonably in any other category.

A brief comment is in order for three of these categories.

Category I, socio-cultural studies, has been established the longest time. With the exception of the 1977-78 boom, caused by the special issue on the Indigenous Mathematics Project, generally it has contributed a fairly steady 2 - 5 percent of titles in each period. However, because sociological articles have become more frequent over time, the relative significance of this category has declined. Category II, student attitudes, seems to be dying, though part of the evidence for this is masked by the way I have organised the data. No articles in this category appeared after 1977. Finally, Category VI, school leaver studies, flourished and died very quickly, though again the organisation of the data partly hides this fact. All but one of the titles in this category appeared in 1972 or 1973.

I want now to narrow my focus still further, to a particular sort of sociological study of education: the study of the interaction of the school and its surrounding society, Category V. This is the only category which addresses the question of the relationship of the school and the society in which it exists, though in fact not all of the articles in this category do so satisfactorily. This is the sort of research which I think needs to be emphasised if we are to have a sound understanding of how education works or fails to work in this country, the sort of research I present in this report.

The seven articles in this category can be divided into three sub-categories. The first (V-A) is of three articles describing how the organisation, curriculum, or classroom practices of the schools conflict with village cultural and social organisation. These are concerned, then, with the mis-match of school and society. These papers differ from those in Category I, socio-cultural studies. Papers in that category generally focus on culture, which they describe or present primarily in mentalistic terms, made up mostly of beliefs and values. Further, they present culture as being passive: helping or hindering the teacher's task. On the other hand, the papers in this sub-category attend to social forces in the society, and see the society as an active force, rather than a passive object. As this important distinction is a subtle one, I return to it later.

The second and third sub-categories (V-B and V-C), each with two papers, are related, in that they take as their focus not the school but the village. Sub-category V-B treats the school as an element in the environment of the village society, describing the ways villagers have incorporated the school, particularly as an economic resource. Thus, the papers in this sub-category discuss educational outcomes primarily in terms of what goes on in villages, rather than what goes on in schools. The third sub-category consists of papers which take the same general approach, though here the concern is not with educational outcomes - whether or not children attend school or learn specific things. Rather, the concern of the articles in this third sub-category is with the ways that village life affects the success or failure of policies which use education to help reach their goals. Both papers are concerned with relevance education, one with the Village Community Schools programme, and one with the Secondary Schools Community Extension Project.

To summarise, the most striking fact about the articles published in the PNGJE over the last 20 years has been the growth in sociological studies of education, particularly since 1970. This is a healthy trend, for it recognises that education is a process which is intensely social, one which cannot be understood properly if it is not understood sociologically. However, I have said that not all sociological studies of education are alike, and I have urged that more attention be paid to the interaction of the school and its surrounding society. More particularly, I have advocated studies which look at education from the village viewpoint. In the balance of this chapter I want to discuss the nature and importance of these sorts of studies.

EDUCATION FROM THE OUTSIDE

The first question I need to address is: Why is it important that we have studies which look at education from the outside, from the village viewpoint? Most simply, because almost all the people in Papua New Guinea who go to school or decide whether or not a child goes to school live in villages and think in terms of villages. The general lack of studies of education from the village viewpoint indicates a general inattention to what would seem to be an area which has a crucial impact on the success or failure of the schools, and of educational policies in this country.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand this is to see schooling as a product offered by the government and missions in this country. This product will not be accepted by potential consumers automatically, even if primary school is made mandatory - for mandatory school laws are very difficult to enforce in urban industrialised countries, and would be almost impossible to enforce in Papua New Guinea. Rather, villagers will decide whether or not to become consumers of education (to send their children to school and encourage them to attend regularly and study) in large part because of the way the school fits with village society, culture and economy. Likewise, broader government policies which rely on formal schooling as one of their components will succeed or fail in substantial part because of the way the educational component fits with village society, culture and economy.

This approach that I am advocating is, in fact, one of the most common in the sociology of education. To give an illustration of it, I will discuss briefly a study by Jerome Karabel

(1977) of one aspect of American higher education. Although the facts of Karabel's study do not themselves apply to Papua New Guinea, the problem he describes provides a concrete example of what I have discussed so far in fairly abstract terms. Also, the problem he describes is pertinent to those countries, like Papua New Guinea, which use estimates of manpower needs (that is, manpower planning) to shape their educational policies. Karabel describes what has happened to an American educational policy which was based on an assessment of manpower needs, but which failed to take into account the place of education in American society and culture. What he analyses is the fate of efforts to encourage the development of vocationally-orientated programmes in community colleges, which are two-year post-secondary institutions, and which have become an important part of American higher education.

Karabel points out that since the later 1950s large corporations, private foundations, state and federal governments, all have promoted two-year colleges as a way to satisfy what they all saw as a growing demand in the labour market for people in what are called sub-professions, fields like nursing and data processing, which require substantial technical training but not the general liberal arts education which is the core of the American BA degree. Thus, the community colleges were promoted as part of a manpower planning policy.

While supporters were looking at the potential role of community colleges as sources of skilled labour, they were ignoring the fact that education generally is closely interwoven with American social structure, beliefs, and values, and that people's educational decisions are based on this broader framework rather than just on the narrower criteria of skill training and job placement. In short, they were ignoring the fit between educational policy and the socio-economic system in which potential consumers of community college education find themselves. Broadly, they ignored the fact that Americans see education as an institution which determines, or at least strongly influences, one's wealth and social status; and more specifically, they ignored the fact that Americans see community colleges as the least prestigious and promising level of tertiary education, and vocational streams or programmes as the least prestigious and promising part of community colleges. Given the stress on upward mobility in the United States, it is not surprising that consumers of education showed very little interest in the vocational, sub-professional programmes in community colleges.

The effects of this appear in the data on community college enrolments Karabel provides. Only a quarter to a third of students entering community colleges chose vocational programmes. The rest choose programmes which parallel the first two years of a liberal arts BA degree, and which gave students the chance of transferring to a full college or university. As a result of their experiences, many of these students came to see their goal of a full BA degree as being unrealistic, but it is interesting to note that most students who came to this decision preferred to leave the community college, rather than transfer to a vocational programme.

What Karabel's study shows is that education connects with the society in complex and subtle ways, and that these connections very strongly influence decisions by educational consumers. Moreover, his study shows that educational planners ignore the connections at their peril. In spite of twenty years of federal, state, foundation, and industry encouragement and financial support, these community college vocational programmes are failing. Furthermore, Karabel's study is a warning of the general danger involved in establishing educational programmes without adequate regard for the links between education and society. This warning is particularly appropriate to attempts to introduce relevant, village-orientated, or vocational programmes in the schools of Papua New Guinea.

As another example of the sort of sociological approach to education I think important, I want to turn now to a different aspect of the relationship between school and society, one which is rather more important in Papua New Guinea, with its introduced alien system of schooling, than it is in Western countries, where educational development has reflected internal forces and movements in the society. Moreover, this aspect is important if one wants to understand differences in village support for education. This aspect is: How villagers explain differences in educational achievement, a topic I return to later in this report. My basic assumption is that villagers' responses to school will depend in part on whether they perceive a fit between the criteria for success in village affairs and the criteria for success in education. In other words: Do villagers see the schools rewarding good children or bad children?

Obviously the school rewards some children and either fails to reward or punishes others, through teacher comment, promotion, and the like. I think it reasonable to assume that people will be more likely to support a school, which includes sending their children to it and encouraging them to study, if they see that the school rewards children who villagers think are good and worthy, and that support will be weaker if the school fails to reward such children. A study by Richard Smith (1975b) of a primary school in Wankung, in the Markham Valley, bears on this point in part. Smith, describing classroom interaction, found that the Amari students he studied were expected to show obedience and quiet interest by their teachers, but that, at least for boys, the behaviour approved by the society was belligerant aggression. While Smith does not make the point explicitly, I think it is reasonable to assume that villagers who see that good children are punished by the schools, will see a conflict between the critera for school success and village success, and will withdraw support from the school in consequence. (I return to this point in Chapter Four of this report.)

Smith's paper bears on another point which I should mention briefly here, partly to prevent a possible misinterpretation of the sort of research I am urging. His article points out what I believe is a shortcoming in the most common sociological studies of education in this country, what I have called socio-cultural studies. The bulk of these, particularly the earlier ones, presents a very peculiar view of culture and social practices. Although they do not say so explicitly, the authors of these papers appear to see the aspects of culture and society which they study as disembodied habits that are somehow arbitrary. That is, as habits of mind or behaviour which bear no noticeable relation to real aspects of daily village life, and hence have no real permanence or institutional support in the village, beyond sheer habit. By failing to describe, or perhaps even to see, the ways these bits of culture, if you will, are rooted in village society, the authors of these articles give the impression that they simply are hinderances to education which need to be circumvented, or better, changed through education itself, a change which at times seems to be seen as requiring no more than the substitution of school knowledge for local belief.

Smith's paper which I have discussed, as well as another he wrote (1972) which I have not dealt with here, takes a fuller view of the situation. Smith does not treat villagers' ideas of proper behaviour as disembodied, unconnected habits of thought. Rather, he shows, albeit indirectly, that rules of behaviour are connected to prestige in the village, and ultimately to the fundamental questions of power and authority over people and resources. For Smith, then, these village ideas about behaviour are not an unexplained and unsupported quirk which, implicitly, proper education can overcome. Rather, they are one aspect of core concerns of village life, which are supported by a range of social practices. As this indicates, it may be that any attempt to change them would require substantial restructuring of village life.

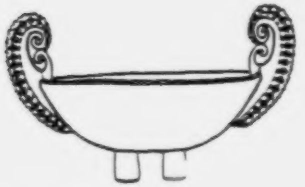
I have given only three examples of the sort of research I am concerned to see undertaken in Papua New Guinea. This is hardly an exhaustive treatment, but it is enough to illustrate one basic point: that schooling does not take place in a vacuum, but in a society. Although this statement is hardly novel, I have shown in this chapter that relatively few people seem to have borne it in mind when studying education in this country. Rather, researchers have tended to ignore the impact of village life on education, and education on village life. Many of those who have been aware of that impact seem to see little more than a disembodied set of cultural beliefs and practices which appears to bear no relation to anything outside of itself. Thus, although it may be a simplification, it is not too far from the truth to say that education researchers generally have studied educational processes and outcomes without regard for what goes on in the village. Clearly this is unsatisfactory.

The corrective I propose may appear equally unsatisfactory: Study educational processes and outcomes without regard for what goes on in the schools. Pursued by itself this strategy would yield unbalanced results of limited utility, but of course the existing orientation of education research in this country, which I have documented in this chapter, is so strong that this strategy would not be pursued by itself. Instead, it is possible that the advocacy of this strategy will result in a more balanced view of education in this country. After all, decisions which are pertinent, indeed crucial, to education in Papua New Guinea are made pretty much independently of what goes on in the schools. Decisions to go to school and work at learning are not, by and large, made independently by children in the classroom as a reasoned response to the curriculum offered to them and to the nature of the interaction going on around them in class. Rather, these decisions are made by parents, and are based on events, practices, and perceptions outside the school which are fairly beyond the abilities of the school itself or the education bureaucracy to influence very much.

The approach that I advocate would entail two sorts of research. The first is ethnographic case studies of the sort that anthropologists routinely do. At their broadest, these would try to find out why people do or do not send their children to school. An adequate answer to this question would almost certainly require information on the ways that educated people fit into the society (as leaders, innovators, sources of remittance, or malcontents or indeed whether they leave the village for good as soon as possible), on the ways villagers interpret educational success and failure (as being in accord with or in conflict with village estimations of the worth of individual children), on the ways skills taught in school relate to social life (are the skills used often or not, and why; to which areas of village life are they pertinent, and why), on the economic aspects of education (if children are not in school would they be economically productive, or superfluous; are school costs financed by powerful villagers as a form of patronage, by parents, or by someone else), and a number of other topics.

These case studies would be valuable in themselves, telling us how education relates to the societies which exist in different parts of Papua New Guinea. More importantly, however, they would suggest topics and lay the groundwork for comparative studies. After all, the much-vaunted diversity of the societies in this country is a real hinderance to anyone obliged to deal with Papua New Guinea as a whole, as educational planners are. The most useful and informative study of a particular village is of unknown usefulness when one is dealing with other villages. Comparative studies would allow an assessment of general factors which, while perhaps not of uniform influence in every society, are of some influence in most societies. In fact, it seems likely that substantial comparative work could be done now, using existing anthropological studies in conjunction with information available in censuses, patrol reports, and other government documents.

My point in this chapter, then, has been a rather simple one. Those concerned with education need to be more aware that schooling does not exist in isolation, and they need to act on that awareness. School curricula, programmes, and the like certainly affect educational outcomes, but no more so than does commitment to education in the society. Most curricula will work with children whose societies teach them to value education and work hard at school, while few curricula will work where the society and hence its children see no value in schooling. All I am asking for is a systematic awareness of this fact.



SECTION ONE

EDUCATION, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY ON PONAM ISLAND

In the preceding chapter I said that studies of education in Papua New Guinea need to take into account the society in which the schools exist. One important corollary of this is that they need to take into account the larger framework in which those societies themselves exist, particularly as the integration of Papua New Guinea, at least at the economic level, seems to be increasing. After all, this integration means that events taking place outside of the society the researcher is studying are having a greater and greater impact on that society.

Section I of this report lays down the dual framework in which education exists in Ponam society, is shaped by Ponam's relation to the larger world - in this case most immediately, the economy of Papua New Guinea.

The first chapter in this section provides a brief historical account of what is now Manus Province, paying particular attention to Ponam Island. This will help show how Ponam has come to the economic position it has now, as well as showing how, and why, much of the rest of Manus Province shares Ponam's position. The second chapter in this section is a more detailed description of modern Ponam society and economy.

Taken together, these two chapters show how Ponam (and indeed Manus Province itself) has changed from an independent social and economic unit, to a dependent outlier of the main Papua New Guinea economy. This dependence has come about because of the disappearance of most of the production and trade which existed in the Admiralty Islands - now Manus Province - before colonial penetration. Ponam's, and Manus's, current dependency is a relatively prosperous one, based on the remittance of money and goods to the area by those who have taken jobs elsewhere in Papua New Guinea, and on government spending within the province. The success of this dependence relies in large part upon the fact that Ponams, like Manus people generally, are quite well educated, and so can get the higher-paying jobs which allow substantial remittance. In short, this section shows the links between education, economy and society on Ponam Island.

Chapter 2

A HISTORY OF PONAM AND MANUS PROVINCE

By: James G. Carrier and Achsah H. Carrier

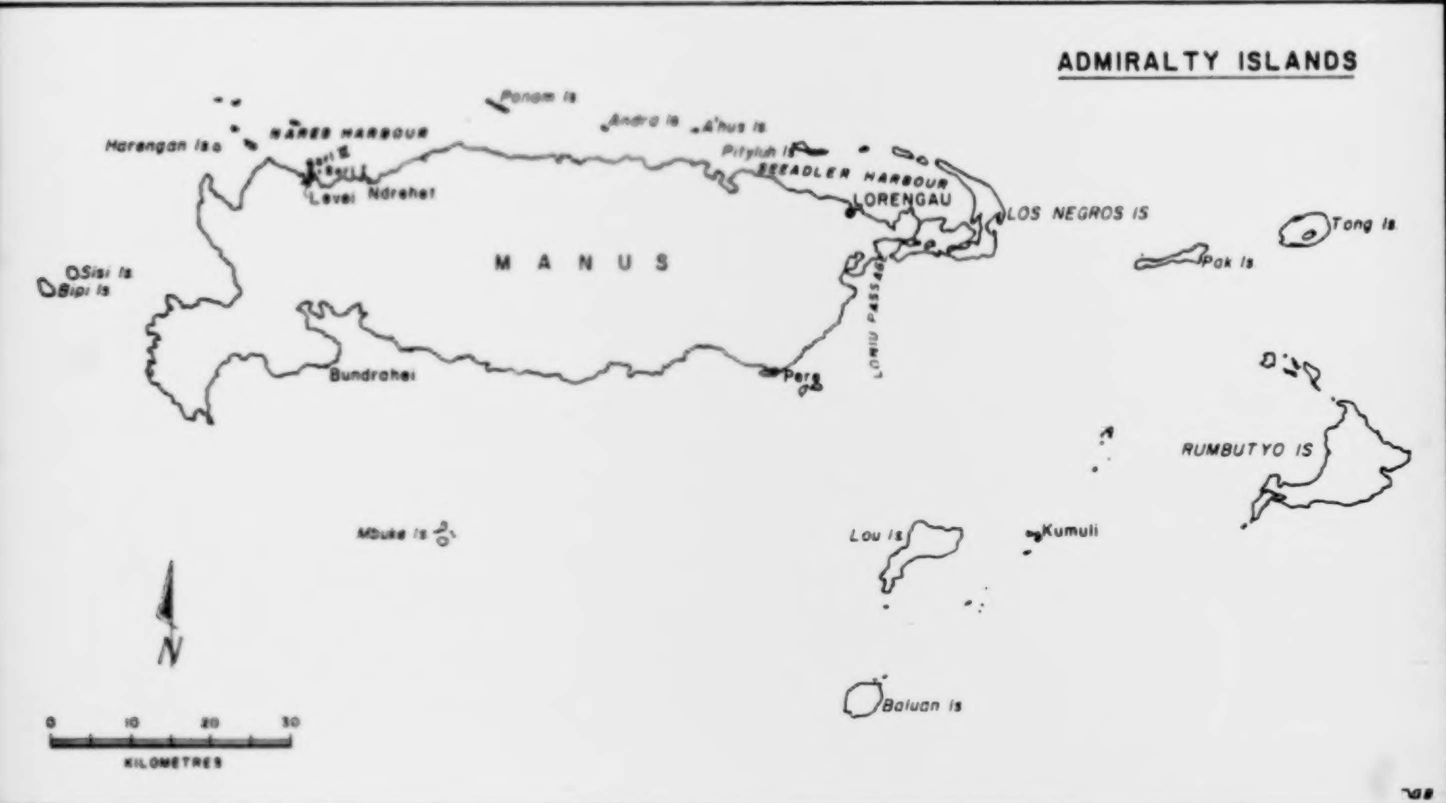
PRE-COLONIAL ECONOMY

Manus consists of a relatively large mainland (actually two islands, Manus and Los Negros, separated by the narrow Loniu Passage), circled by a number of off-shore islands of different sorts. Before extensive colonial penetration the region had an integrated economic system based on local specialisation in the production of goods. There were two main types of specialisation, ecological and social. Ecologically the region is differentiated rather sharply. At one pole were a number of villages built in lagoons or on small infertile islands, whose residents specialised in transport and marine products. At the other pole were villages of mainland Manus, with extensive land resources but in most cases no access to the sea. In between were people from the large, high islands off the south coast who had both gardens and reefs. In addition, a few areas had natural resources of special worth: for instance Lou Island had obsidian, Mbuke and certain mainland areas had pottery clay, and some of the smaller north coast islands had beds of **Imbricaria Punctata,** the basis of shell money.

This basic ecological division into agriculturalists and fishermen had an important social underpinning, the relatively continuous warfare between mainland groups and their island and off-shore counterparts especially when either group tried to colonise the coastal strip. This made it more difficult for any group to have access to both soil and sea, though some did (eg. Kuluah 1977), so helping maintain the division of production.

Ecological specialisation was supplemented by three sorts of social specialisation. First is what we call patents, whereby patrilineages or villages owned the right to manufacture their speciality. Generally these rights were recognised by other communities, but they could be protected by force. Second is trade monopolies in which a community controlled trade in a raw material, and hence had an effective manufacturing monopoly. Thus, the people of Ahus Island off the north coast had a trade monopoly on pottery clay from a site owned by a mainland group, which gave them a monopoly on the north coast production of pots. Third was informal specialisation: some individuals or groups were known to be better and more skilled producers of certain goods than others.

Figure 1 Map of Manus


ADMIRALTY ISLANDS
Ponam Is
Andra Is
A'hus Is
NARES HARBOUR
Harengan Is
Sori II
Sori I
Levei
Ndrehet
Pityluh Is
SEEADLER HARBOUR
LORENGAU
LOS NEGROS IS
Tong Is
Pok Is
M A N U S
Sisi Is
Bipi Is
LOMBRUM PASSAGE
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RUMBUTYO IS
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GEOG DEPT U P N G

27 M 439 MAN 09 83

As the preceding paragraphs suggest, many different goods have been the subject of specialised production, though it does appear from the reports of Margaret Mead (1930, 1963 (1930)), Richard Parkinson (1907), Theodore Schwartz (1963), and Ponam Islanders themselves, that different places specialised in different goods or services at different times. These various sources indicate that many different sorts of things were the object of the local specialisation, including: bananas, beds, canoes, coconuts, coconut oil, combs, dancing poles, dishes, dogs' teeth, gourds, lime, nets, obsidian, oil containers, pigs, pots, sails, sea transport, shell money, taro, turtles, war charms, woodwork, and yams.

As far as we know, these manufactures, as well as others that were produced more widely, moved throughout the region and were important in every community. This entailed an elaborate circulation system, which helped integrate the region into a single, complex economic unit. There were three types of circulation: commercial exchange, the direct exchange of goods at pre-established rough prices or equivalents between people who were not necessarily kinsmen; ceremonial exchange, the exchange of gifts between mutually-obligated kinsmen as part of the celebration of social events; and trade partnerships, exchanges between trade partners or **kawas**, which falls somewhere between commercial and ceremonial exchange.

Commercial exchange took place most frequently at the markets located around the coast of the main island, organised and overseen usually by an island or off-shore village together with a mainland village. These markets were not without tension, as market partners often were enemies as well (eg. Mead 1930: 118), and Ponams say that the risk of violence at market was so great that women were not allowed to participate. Markets were open only to the owning villages, though other people could come as guests. Within the market anyone was free to do business with anyone else. Ponams remember separate markets with three groups of mainlanders: each was held once every three or four days, so there was a market somewhere almost every day. Island sea food and mainland vegetables were the most important goods, but raw materials and manufactures could be traded as well. While marketers and traders often demanded a particular item in return for their own goods, equally, within the market, and indeed everywhere, anything could be exchanged for anything else without prejudice: there appear to have been no formal spheres of exchange (cf. Mead 1930: 122, 130). Supplementing the market trade was a certain amount of direct exchange or purchase carried on at the same time, but outside the marketplace, either between kinsmen or between non-kin mediated by a common kinsman. Unlike the market trade, which was primarily for food, this trade was for manufactured goods and raw materials.

In addition to commercial exchange and overwhelming it in ideological importance was ceremonial exchange, the most spectacular form of which Ponams and many others called **lapan**: prestigious exchanges between the leaders **(lapan)** of different communities, which helped integrate the region socially and economically. Although no community would sponsor a **lapan** more than about once a generation, one seems to have occurred somewhere in Manus every few years. According to Ponams the primary gifts given by the sponsoring village were its main specialist product, so that, for example, Ponam held shell money **lapan,** Ahus had pot **lapan,** and Andra had fish **lapan.**

In addition to the major gift-giving and accompanying ceremony which made **lapan** the preeminent political and ceremonial event in pre-colonial Manus, there was the opportunity for trade and commerce generally. Ponams who have seen some of the last **lapan** describe them as being like the Provincial Show: drawing people together from all over Manus for the display of skill and wealth, and for the exchange and sale of goods.

The other important form of ceremonial exchange was between affines, and followed the cycle of life-crisis rituals and marriage payments. These also served to integrate different communities, though less directly than did the **lapan** exchanges. Even though Ponam, Pere and apparently all Manus villages, were primarily endogamous (Schwartz 1963: 62), affinal exchange necessarily involved inter-village trade, because many of the gifts were specialist manufactures which had to be imported (cf. Mead 1930: 119), and because these exchanges required more than a single person or his immediate kin could accumulate alone. For both reasons people had to draw on trade partners in other villages.

Trade partners, **kawas,** kinsmen in other villages, were used not only for special occasions, but also to help provide basic foodstuffs and other necessities of daily living. As Ponams remember it, **kawas** could sell goods to each other or exchange directly, but **kawas** trade also routinely involved long-term large-scale obligations. By having **kawas** in different regions of Manus an individual could trade for the produce of these regions. In fact, **kawas** made travel itself possible, as it was unsafe to visit where one did not have kin.

It appears, then, that early Manus consisted of a number of separate and often antagonistic village societies, which together formed an economic system. The economic integration of the region rested on socially and ecologically based production specialisations which were maintained from time to time by force. This division of labour supported and was supported by an extensive system of commercial and ceremonial circulation, itself largely the consequence of marriage, either intra-village (affinal exchange) or inter-village (**kawas** trade). The whole system was capped by **lapan** exchanges, competitive inter-village affairs. With the German, and subsequent Australian colonisation of Manus, this regional self-sufficient independence disappeared.

EARLY COLONIAL HISTORY

The earliest recorded European contact with the main part of Manus was by Menezes in 1527 (Hughes 1977: 19), and the first significant contact probably began in the 1840s, through whalers active in the Bismarck Archipelago (cf. Maude 1966). Contact intensified after 1870, when the area became a commercial source of pearlshell, tortoise shell, and beche-de-mer, though it does not seem to have been a significant source of labour in the 19th century (Firth 1973. 171-73). By the time of German annexation in 1884, most Manus were familiar with European goods, if not with Europeans themselves. Iron tools were in use by 1875 on the relatively isolated northwest coast (Moseley 1876-77: 412), and after the turn of the century Parkinson (1907: 298) saw only metal tools in the region.

Although they had contact with Europeans previously (King 1978:74), the first non-Melanesian Ponams remember now was Isokide Komine, the leading Japanese trader in German New Guinea, who began working in the Bismarck Archipelago in 1902 (Biskup 1970: 103). His ship wrecked on the north Ponam reef, islanders say, and they rescued him and his crew at the insistance of their **lapan**, Kuluah Kaso, who apparently felt his island would benefit more by trade than by warfare. Most Manus, however, did not have good relations with outsiders during this period. They looted wrecked vessels and murdered their crews, and lured sound ships to ambush with the same end (Sack and Clark 1979: passim).

If the Germans found it difficult to pacify Manus, this largely was because there were so few Europeans in the area. Continuous European presence began around 1898 with the establishment of a trading station on Kumuli, off southeast Manus. It had two resident agents of the German traders Hernscheim and Company (King 1978: 48, see also Hempenstall 1978: 153). By 1902 there were only seven expatriates resident (Thompson nd: 6), and the German administration recognised the need for a permanent, well-equipped station in the area (Sack and Clark 1979: 244). Partly as a result of the increasing demand for labour, the Germans finally established a permanent station in Lorengau in 1911, and in 1913 claimed to control coastal and island Manus (Firth 1976: 55). In 1915 the new Australian military establishment consisted of 14 whites and 33 New Guinean police (Rowley 1958: 20), and as late as 1917 colonial control was not effective in areas of inland Manus. Even at the outbreak of World War II there were only about 50 whites in Lorengau (Jackson 1976: 388).

Economic penetration, however, was taking place. In 1906 people in eastern Manus began to sign labour contracts. In 1908 44 Manus signed, the figure rising to 823 in 1913 (Firth 1973: 173). In 1906 Hernscheim and Company added six plantations (King 1978: 119) to the two owned already (Sack and Clark 1979: 265). Continuing growth in labour recruiting and plantations was the local manifestation of a tremendous growth in both in German New Guinea between 1900 and 1914, consequent on the recovery and boom in copra prices (Firth 1973, 1976).

These changes affected Ponam. Not long after 1906, Komine, acting for the traders Hernscheim and Company, bought the empty two-thirds of the island and its accompanying reef for a plantation and trochus source. Also Ponams say that just about all men who became adults after the arrival of Komine signed at least one three-year labour contract. Like most Manus, Ponams disliked plantation labour, seeking instead work as domestics, boatmen, and best of all policemen.

Although in many areas of Manus German control was established through force, the administrative presence was, apart from labour recruiting, relatively mild after pacification. Missionaries had a greater impact. Methodists and Wesleyans made forays into Manus at the beginning of the century, but set up no permanent missions (King 1978: 7-8). The first to settle in Manus were the rich German Catholic order, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC; cf. Hempenstall 1975). In 1913 they went to Papitalai in eastern Manus but had no success there. Subsequently, in 1916 they moved to Bundralis on the north-central coast opposite Ponam (Kelly nd: 16). Lutherans and Seventh Day Adventists had established themselves by the 1930s (Schwartz 1962: 223).

At Bundralis the MSC opened a vernacular school in 1918. By 1923 the growing number and linguistic diversity of students and converts forced a shift to Tok Pisin for teaching and religious work. Catholicism, the dominant religion in north-central Manus, had more impact than German control. The missionaries forbade magic and sorcery; banned **lapan** exchange, the last Ponam one was around 1924 and the last nearby was at Andra a year later; and required monogamy, which Ponams took and still take to forbid not only polygamy, but also divorce, and remarriage after the death of a spouse.

The First World War missed the Admiralties. The in-coming Australians recognised the village **luluai** or headmen appointed by the Germans (PR 6-52/53), permitted resident German missionaries to remain, and so far as Ponams remember they continued the German administrative practices (cf. Rowley 1958: 50). However, the Hernscheim and Company plantations were seized and sold to Australian ex-servicemen. In the mid-1920s a man named McEvoy bought the Komine plantation and several others around Manus (PR February 1949). Like Komine, he seems to have got on well with people, but had relatively little contact with them.

By the early 1920s almost the entire region had come under full Australian control. While the Germans did not try to do much more than pacify the area, the Australians slowly began to build a structure of administration and control: health programmes, regular patrols and censuses, adjudication of disputes, and the like. These sat fairly lightly on Manus people, however, and were less important than the other forces colonisation had set in motion, forces which were to alter Manus radically, if not very visibly.

The fundamental change was in the Manus economy. It ceased to be an independent system of interdependent villages tied together by a complex division of production and system of circulation, and became instead a dependent outlier of the main Papua New Guinea economy, and through it the Australian economy, consisting of a relatively structureless collection of villages relying less and less on each other to acquire the means of survival, and more and more on remittances sent back to Manus by migrant workers. The old articulated system of locality, production, kinship and circulation was replaced, as the location of the significant source of wealth moved out of the region and out of the direct control of village societies. As a result villages have shifted their orientation away from each other and toward the outside world, and have shifted their economies away from specialist production and exchange and toward remittance and consumption. The most important aspects of colonisation leading in this direction were the imposition of colonial peace, labour recruiting, and the establishment of missions.

The establishment of plantations, it appears, had less effect than these three main factors. According to the report to the League of Nations in 1921-22 (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1922), 2.4 percent of the region's approximately 1000 square miles of land was alienated, much of that on the coastal strip which had been a no-man's land in many parts of the area before colonisation, and by no means had all the alienated land been planted. As far as we can tell, Schwartz (1962: 224) is broadly correct when he concludes that in being colonised 'the people of the Admiralties suffered little physical deprivation. Most villages lost little or no land', though obviously some villages did suffer (eg. Kuluah 1977). However, plantations provided a demand for local foodstuffs to feed labourers prior to the switch, before the end of World War I, to the standard diet of rice and tinned beef, and provided a demand for pearlshell and trochus. Satisfying these demands diverted labour from old productive activities to new ones.

The imposition of colonial peace, on the other hand, meant that force could not be used to preserve the ecological and social divisions of production, though the disappearance of much local manufacturing by mid-century reduced the significance of this. Moreover, in order to make mission and administration work easier, groups were encouraged to settle on the coastal strip, which many inland and a few island villages did, anxious to have access to both soil and sea. Colonial peace, then, began to undercut the pre-colonial division of production which underlay much of the integration of the region.

While the ending of warfare released a large amount of time for other activities, labour migration drained productive men from the region. Between 1905 and 1913 Manus people signed 2321 labour contracts (King 1978: 120). In 1921-22 2224 Manus people were employed, out of a total population of 11,622 (Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1922: 54). If we assume that all migrants were active males, then migrants were not only 19 percent of the total population, they were 38 percent of the males (males = 1/2 of population), and almost 55 percent of the active males (active males = 2/3 of males), leading to a significant decrease in the ratio of producers to dependents. Particularly on Ponam this led to a shift in the sexual division of labour, facilitated by the increased security resulting from colonial peace, as women began to travel further afield, participate more widely in all forms of exchange, and take on productive activities previously reserved for men. We speculate that remaining producers had to devote more of their energies to the production of food or of goods to be exchanged for food, and less on the manufacture and trade of luxury goods.

For example, it appears that as World War II approached Ponams decreased their trade with more distant parts of Manus but maintained their trade with the adjacent mainland people with whom they exchanged fish for starch foods and raw materials. Also, they gave up the manufacture of shell money in part, they say, because women's labour was needed for subsistence production. Likewise, Mead (1963 (1930): 231) indicates that by the late 1920s in southeast Manus the labour devoted to carved beds and bowls was dropping. This helped break up the region's integrated production and exchange system, replacing it with a collection of pairs of villages - starch and fish producers - trading in essential foodstuffs and raw materials with each other, but trading less and less with other villages for ceremonial, luxury, and speciality goods. (Remember that inland villagers moving to the coast under colonial peace were relatively slow to take up fishing for themselves.) Of course, this shift in trade was facilitated by the manufactured goods workers brought back with them, which replaced Manus manufactures.

The third important colonial introduction was missions. As we noted, they opposed **lapan** exchanges and thus weakened one of the institutions helping integrate the region economically. More important, however, were the schools they started. Their immediate effect may have been slight, though it seems likely that literacy in Tok Pisin helped people get jobs outside the plantation sector. More important, the schools helped establish a taste for education and a belief in the benefits of formal schooling. Certainly Ponams and people from other north-central villages began early to go to school at Bundralis.

As should be clear, colonial peace, labour migration, and mission activity all set up the conditions for the destruction of an integrated, independent Manus regional economy. The end of warfare, the loss of local labour power to paying jobs, the importation of Western manufactures, and the settlement of people on the coast, were incompatible with the extensive system of ceremonial and market exchanges through which villages converted their speciality items into what they needed to live. The signs of decay were appearing more frequently, but even so Schwartz's conclusion (1963: 87-88) that this system survived the inter-war years, is essentially correct. Prior to World War II the bulk of Manus people continued to produce and exchange goods with other Manus people in Manus institutions. The coming war caused the final destruction of the Manus regional system, though paradoxically other consequences of the war meant that many Manus people, Ponams among them, did not realise what they had lost until the late 1950s.

REORIENTATION AND DEPENDENCE

In this section we show how the old system finally collapsed, producing a region dependent on and reoriented toward external sources of wealth. This does not mean that all the old ways disappeared, for as we said previously, while the change in Manus has been radical, in many ways it is not very visible. Manus people still have a strong system of ceremonial exchange and ritual, still garden, fish, and trade. However, the context of these activities has changed, changing the socio-economic forces they reflect and the part they play in Manus life. This section is in three parts. First is a brief history of modern Manus, from World War II to the present. Next is a look at modern Ponam. Finally we look at the available evidence to see how reorientation and dependence varies in Manus.

The Japanese captured Manus peacefully in 1942, and seem to have had relatively little effect on the economy, but after the recapture of Manus in February 1944, the region was flooded with soldiers, bases, ships, and supplies, as Manus was used for the bombardment of Rabaul and for assaults on islands closer to Japan. Of the estimated 14,000 Manus in 1944, 5000 were supported directy by the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) (Creamer

1948: 11), and it is certain that thousands more received unofficial support. Not only this, but after the war the military left much of its material behind (cf. Schwartz 1962: 230), an infusion of wealth which masked the rapid deterioration of the Manus productive system. While traditional activities continued, they depended increasingly on wealth acquired outside the traditional economy. Thus, by the early 1950s brideprice payments along the northeast coast included substantial quantities of imported Western goods, and money (A£50 or so; PR3-52/53).

Local manufacturing had been fading and the war completed the process. Apparently the last manufacture of consequence was the Ahus pottery, which shut down around 1952 (PR3-52/53). Quite simply, people saw Western manufactures as better than local equivalents, and adopted them. Also, we think they were appealing because they could be acquired outside trade relationships, which, remember, were tense relationships. While cash goods did enter the **kawas** system, people could get them at stores in their own villages, or have them sent, or paid for, by family members working elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. This furthered a reorientation away from other Manus people and toward the outside world.

Manus people did try to reproduce the Western prosperity around them in a number of different ways. These ranged from informal attempts to start businesses, through the co-operative movement, to the most obvious and best reported of these efforts, Paliau's New Way movement (Schwartz 1962), which flourished in the 1940s and 1950s. In the New Way, Paliau and his followers attempted to take economic and political control of their own lives by combining the best traditional and modern ways, to produce prosperity in a framework of Manus justice. In their efforts to strengthen Manus economy and society, however, Paliau and his followers advocated policies which would complete the destruction of the old integrated and independent regional system. They sought to do away with the ecological and social divisions which underlay the system of village interdependence, including 'all the old divisions of rank, clan, ethnic group, and ecological type... The (lagoon dwellers) were to move ashore, the (inlanders) to move to the beach; both were to practice mixed fishing and gardening' (Schwartz 1963: 93). Likewise, Paliau and his followers wanted to eliminate the extensive affinal exchanges which were the reason for much of the inter-village trade and which provided the basis for indebted labour in southeast Manus, to eliminate the sexual shame and affinal avoidance which made relations between the sexes and between affines so tense, and to hasten integration with the expanding colonial economy through increasing primary production of commercially valuable commodities (Schwartz 1962: passim).

The co-operative movement was another aspect of the desire to generate wealth. The surge of interest began soon after the war, and in Manus Paliau was advocating co-operatives in 1953 and 1954, consciously anticipating the administration's plan to introduce them shortly thereafter (Schwartz 1962: 334). From 1950 to the mid 1960s, 14 producers' and consumers' co-operatives were established in Manus, mostly in the areas which followed the New Way (Schwartz 1966-67: 36). However, they were less successful than either the government or villages hoped, and failure was common.

Confronted with the failure of internal sources of wealth, many Manus people looked to paid employment. As we noted, mission education between the wars helped develop a tradition of literacy and numeracy and a desire for Western education, which now began to bear fruit. The modern impact of this desire appears most strikingly at the tertiary level. For instance, Finney (1971: 51) found that for the six provinces she studied, including the quite prosperous East New Britain, Manus had the highest per capita enrolment, with 43 students per 100,000 population at the University of Papua New Guinea and Administrative College together. The next highest was 28 per 100,000 for East New Britain. Weeks's (1977) study of tertiary education in the 1970s shows similar results, the Manus students consistently over-represented at the National High Schools, teachers colleges, and the two universities. He shows Manus consistently had the highest per capita enrolment in the country in these institutions in the early and middle 1970s.

More immediately, after the war there was a general expansion of education in Manus (and elsewhere), as well as a shift to English for instruction, and Manus people took advantage of this in two ways. First, in going to school they increased their ability to get desirable, well-paid jobs, and second, many Manus people taught in the expanding school system.

In the 1950s and 1960s migration produced relatively little benefit, as real wages, especially in the mission primary schools where many Manus worked, were so low that substantial remittances were not possible. However, through the 1960s there was a significant increase in real wages at all levels, combined with expanding opportunities for Papua New Guineans at higher occupational levels, so that migrants were in a position to save and remit substantial amounts of money. And the rate of migration was quite high. The 1971 census showed that 14.8 percent of Manus born people lived outside the province, the second highest rate in the country (Gulf Province was higher, at 20.4 percent; May and Skeldon 1977: 10). A provincial planning estimate indicates that in 1980 migrants remitted about K1.2 million to the province (Lansdell 1981a: Fig.3), or about K46 for each of the 25,844 residents (Papua New Guinea 1980).

One can see post-war migration as a continuation of pre-war trends. But these two waves of migration have had rather different effects. The pre-war migration made life more difficult in certain ways, weakening the social and economic underpinnings of Manus life. On the other hand, in the post-war period, and especially after the middle and late 1960s, the remittances almost certainly served to stabilise, and probably bolster, the region's reoriented, dependent economy, which migration now complemented rather than disrupted.

The post-war period, and especially the period leading up to and following independence in 1975, saw as well the development of government spending as a substantial source of income for the region. Manus has many schools and health services (cf. King and Ranck 1982: 26-31), and a substantial civil service establishment (cf. Jackson 1976: 393), generating a large amount of wages, much of which benefits the region. The 1979 provincial budget shows the impact of government spending: total revenue for that year was K3.13 million, of which about 95 percent was in grants from the national government (Titus 1980: 28), the balance coming from provincial sources. An estimate for the province as a whole (Lansdell 1981a: Fig.3) gives a total inward flow of K5.5 million in 1980, of which K0.5 million was in return for good produced in the province, and shows that the bulk of the inward flow was sent back out again for basic commodities.

Through the later post-war period, then, Manus people became more and more dependent upon and oriented toward the larger world, as the region ceased to be an integrated, inward-looking socio-economic unit, and became instead a relatively disintegrated, outward-looking dependent outlier of the Papua New Guinea economy. Moreover, the relative success of this dependency springs in large part from the educational opportunities open to Manus people, and the privileged entry into the labour market that their extensive education has allowed them.

We turn now to Ponam, to see how these general changes appeared in one particular place.

Shortly after the Allied invasion in January 1944, the United States Navy took over Ponam for an air base (Anonymous 1947), and moved islanders to Andra, the next island eastward. While there they got rations from the military and continued to frequent the base on Ponam, and a number took jobs as ANGAU labourers. After their return home in 1946 they found themselves confronted with a large quantity of surplus military goods: timber, furniture, sheet metal, tools, and utensils.

By August 1944 (PR 2-44/45) markets generally had reopened after the fighting, and Ponams say they had barter markets at two coastal sites while they were on Andra. The fragile nature of the economic system is apparent in the fact that around 1946 these markets shut again, because they were unsatisfactory to all concerned. Also, Ponams traded with Australian and American military personnel at the growing cash market at the military headquarters at Indrim.

After their return home in 1946 Ponams began to face the problem of life without American and ANGAU support. As their markets were closed, they got most of their starch from trade partners, with whom they began to trade cash and cash goods, reflecting both the increased desire for imported goods and decreasing mainland demand for island fish. This meant that if islanders were to get the starch they needed they had to have a regular source of money and imported goods. Like many people, Ponams got jobs around Manus with the military: in late 1952 (PR6-52/53) 14 Ponams were away from the island working. Like some, but unlike many, Ponams also had access to left-over military supplies, and very quickly these entered the **kawas** trade.

Around 1951 the coastal market trade resumed, again barter markets only. The traditional orientation of the market leaders, trying to impose a system of commerce no longer appropriate to the changed demand for fish, meant that these markets were unsatisfactory. However, in other respects this was a time of substantial innovation and reorganisation. Although Ponam, like most of northwest Manus, did not join the Paliau movement, islanders too wanted to produce for themselves the new prosperity. They tried to do this by entering into new economic activities, particularly trade stores, which, under administration urging, they established as collective ventures supported by groups of share-holders. The first Manus trade store license went to a Ponam, and by September 1953 (PR2-53/54) there were five stores on north-central and northwest Manus, four of them on Ponam.

Their only other important source of wealth was trochus. By early 1951 (PR 30-6-2 of 1950-51) trochus was A£10 a bag, and the buyer Jack Thurston had paid more than A£2000 for Ponam shells. He was the important buyer of their trochus, and Ponams say he made only three or four purchases during the boom, which we take to run between about 1950 and 1957, when the price peaked and collapsed (van Pel 1961: 54).

A number of important events occurred about the time trochus prices collapsed. The coastal markets shut down again, and Ponams had their offer to buy the old plantation accepted (PR2-57/58). To pay for this they redeemed their trade store shares, which left the stores with too little operating capital. By August 1958 (PR 3-58/59) all stores were bankrupt and the administration ordered them shut. The post-war boom was over, and Ponams, like Manus generally, were thrown back on their own resources. Their large trade stores, drawing custom and profits from much of the north coast, were closed; their local markets were shut; trochus prices had collapsed; they had spent much of their cash to buy back a plantation which contained few trees and produced little copra; their traditional trading partners were fishing for themselves and increasingly were demanding cash and cash goods for sago and other staples.

For about the next decade Ponams survived by a post-war version of long-distance trade. They took their fish to where it was expensive (at Indrim until the Lorengau market opened), sold it and took their money to buy sago where it was cheap (the sago-producing areas west of Ponam). At first the bulk of this sago changed hands within the framework of the **kawas** system, albeit for cash and cash goods; by about 1960 this had changed to a free market open to anyone with the money to buy. Their economic activities were contracting, concerned more and more with the basics of survival. This appears in the post-prosperity trade stores. There were only two of these surviving for any length of time, both opened in the late 1950s (a third opened in 1972). They were small, carried few goods, and survived only because their owners (the aid post orderly and the hygiene officer) subsidised them with their wages.

The early 1960s also saw the last stage of the monetising of Ponam life. It was during this time that cash and cash goods became important to Ponam domestic ceremonial exchange. Whereas the 1940s and 1950s saw the monetisation of external coastal trade, by the middle 1960s the thing most totally under the control of Ponams themselves, their own affinal exchanges, had become monetised.

Basically this commercialisation of the economy and monetisation of intra-village exchange, remain today. What has changed, strikingly for Ponam, is the amount of money people have to spend. And they have it because since schools re-opened after the war they have sent their children to school for as many years as possible, and encouraged them to migrate and send money home (cf. Chapter Three of this report; Carrier 1979, 1981; Carrier and Conroy 1982). Ponams receive enough in remittances that they can afford to exchange cash and cash goods with their trade partners and pay cash for sago in the markets, which re-opened in 1977. Almost all the old functional interdependence in Manus is gone, and trade partners trade many imported goods, but at least for now they do have goods to trade.

We turn now to the question of the ways that village dependency in Manus varied. A survey of five villages in 1980 (Lansdell 1981b) helps show how different parts of the region compare on different measures of orientation toward and dependence on the external economy. The conclusion we draw, an unsurprising one, is that the more isolated parts of the region are less dependent than the less isolated. We define isolation in terms of the cost of travel to Lorengau, the provincial capital, partly because this information was included in the survey.

The survey covers two villages in the north-central coast and one in southeast Manus, three villages which are relatively less isolated with relatively cheap and easy transport to Lorengau. As well it covers one village from central inland Manus and another from the far southwest coast, the two which are relatively more isolated. The total absentee rate for these five villages is 36 percent, and only the two more isolated villages are below that figure (Lansdell 1981b:4). A related measure is the percent of households with absentees: 90 percent on average, and again only the two more isolated villages are below that figure (Lansdell 1981b:12). Somewhat different is the percent of absentees which is male: 64 for the whole group, and only the two more isolated villages are above this figure (Lansdell 1981b:12). Taken together, then, the two more isolated villages show a relatively lower migration rate and a relatively more male migrant group. We take both of these as indicating a relatively tenuous link to the larger economy. Consistent with this is the distribution of certain high-cost goods. The mean value per household of these goods was K316, and the two villages with a mean figure of less than half that were the two more isolated ones, another sign of relatively low engagement with the larger economy.

One further set of data will allow us to place Ponam along this dimension of degree of dependence. Table 3 shows the absentee rate for males aged 17-45 for four Manus villages, including Ponam, between 1949 and 1979. We assume that earlier and higher absentee rates show a greater involvement with and dependence on the national economy. The figures for Ponam and Derimbat, a north coastal village between Ponam and Lorengau (the first two columns in the table) show similar patterns: a relatively low post-war rate, rising to more than 75 percent around 1970, and falling back to between 50 and 60 percent in 1979. The data for Buyang, the inland village in the third column, follow a broadly similar pattern but with lower absentee rates than the first two villages. It also has an anomolous post-war rate, which may have been the consequence of involvement in the Paliau movement, when people from many inland villages moved to the southeast coast. The far distant village, Bundrehi in the last comumn, shows a much weaker version of the general pattern. But even here a third of the age group was absent in the 1970s, so that even if migration in this more isolated village was relatively low, absolutely it was fairly high.

Table 3 Percent of males 17-45 absent, selected villages

Nominal census date	Ponam: north-central coast	Derimbat: northeast coast	Buyang: inland	Bundrehi: southwest	Notes
1949	8%	13%	46%	0%	
1961	29	36*	16	9	* = 1963
1971	78	76	66*	33	* = 1965
1979	60	51	41	33	

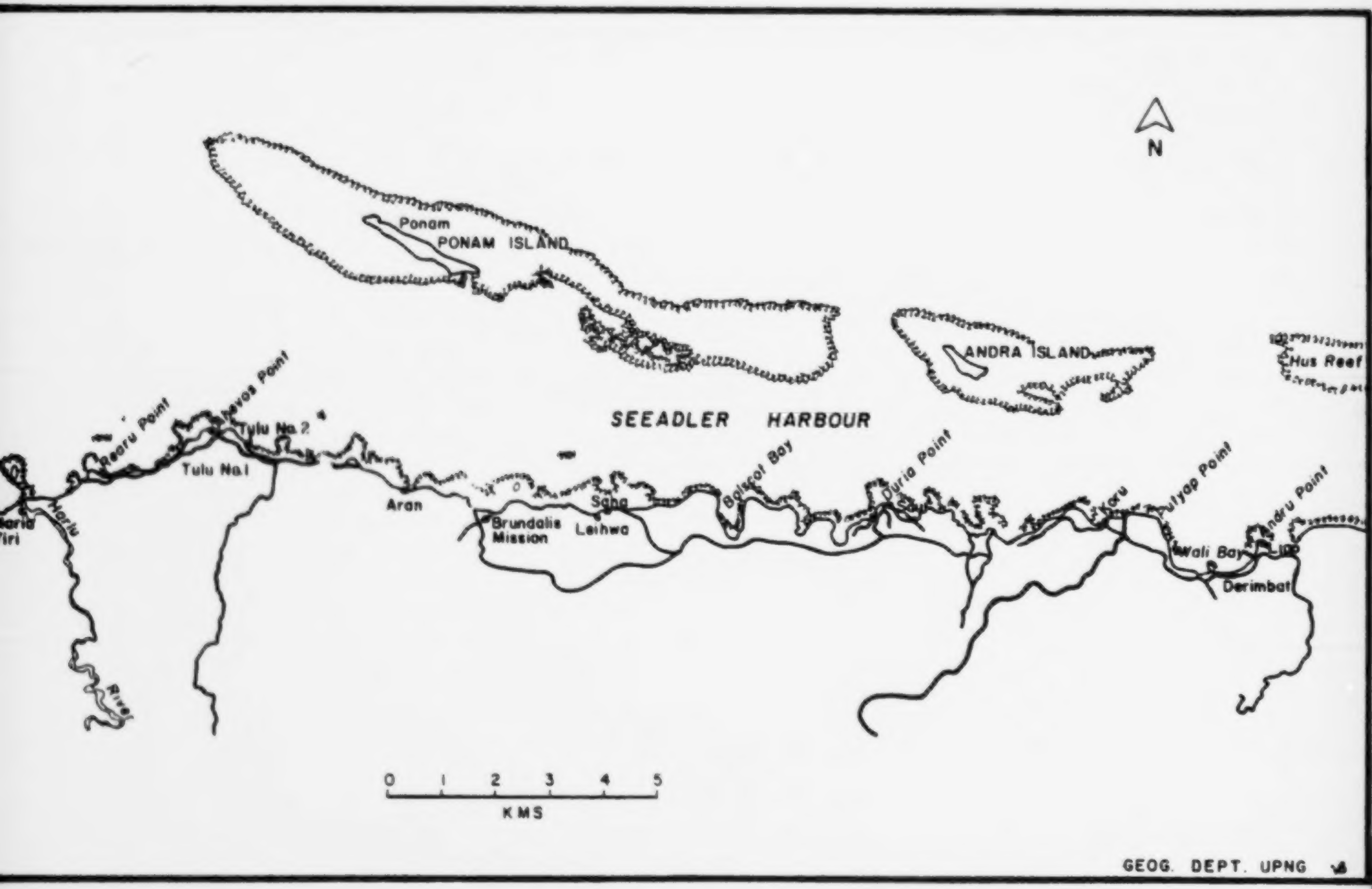
Source: De'Ath, n.d.

Taken together these data show that orientation toward and dependence on the national economy are facts of life in Manus, but not uniformly so. Those areas closer to Lorengau show greater involvement with the outside world than do those more distant, though even the more distant villages show a fairly high engagement. Finally, it should be noted that the bulk of the region's population is relatively close to Lorengau: 70 percent of the provincial population, or 60 percent of the rural population consider (Papua New Guinea 1980: Table 3).

PONAM EDUCATION AND MIGRATION

Having laid out a brief history of the region in which Ponam finds itself, we want now to look more closely at the history of education and migration on Ponam. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find accurate historical information, so we have had to rely on the information we have gathered about Ponams who were alive at the end of 1979, when the bulk of fieldwork was being done. While we do have some information on the dead elder siblings and parents of living Ponams, we do not have enough to warrant anything more than the general impression mentioned in the preceding parts of this chapter: first, that islanders began to take advantage of mission schooling early on, certainly not later than the second half of the 1920s; and second, that just about every Ponam male who came of age after the turn of the century served as a migrant worker at one time or another.

Figure 2 Map of Ponam Island


N
Ponam
PONAM ISLAND
ANDRA ISLAND
Hus Reef
SEEADLER HARBOUR
Tulu No.2
Tulu No.1
Aran
Brundalis Mission
Saha
Leihwa
Duria Point
Pulyap Point
Wali Bay
Derimbat
0 1 2 3 4 5
KMS
GEOG. DEPT. UPNG

What we will present in this section, then, is what we have learnt about Ponam adults living now. This means that our conclusions about the past are indirect, and biased by the fact that we know only about the living. This problems becomes significant for those who came to maturity before World War II, and is acute for those who came of age in the 1920s, those born in the 1910s and before. As a general rule it is true that the Ponams who migrated began to do so by their 20s at the latest, and that those who are educated began their schooling as children, so while we do not present detailed data for when the members of different age groups went to school or to work, we think it is safe to interpret the data we present for each age group as indicating what members of that groups were doing when they were young.

We will look first at migration. Table 4 shows the migration history of Ponam adults, and shows three things for each age cohort: (1) the total number of people in that cohort, (2) what percent ever migrated, and (3) what percent were not living on Ponam at the time of our research. Briefly, it shows that just about all adult males migrated at one time or another, and that a substantial percentage of females has migrated as well, particularly in the two youngest age groups. We need to point out, of course, that many of the females migrated as wives of working husbands. Certainly now, and presumably also in the past, migrant women are unlikely to continue work once they are married, and certainly they cease work once they have children.

Table 4 Migration of living Ponam adults*

Birth Decade	Age 1980	Men Percent out Ever	 Still	 N	Women Percent out Ever	 Still	 N
1900-09	71-80	-	-	0	0%	0%	8
1910-19	61-70	100%	0%	10	25	0	8
1920-29	51-60	90	15	20	24	0	21
1930-39	41-50	100	57	28	35	13	23
1940-49	31-40	100	82	28	69	54	26
1950-59	21-30	83	69	58	9	43	44

* While all migrant men have worked, not all migrant women have done so.

Table 5 presents information on the education of these same people, showing first of all that even the earliest cohorts had a good chance of some education, except for the earliest women. With one important exception educational levels rose fairly steadily over this century, and that exception is women born in the 1930s. Because of World War II, Ponams of both sexes born in that decade had their educational opportunities disrupted.

However, this had no substantial, lasting effect on men, who generally picked up their schooling after the War when more normal life resumed, even though some of them were rather old to be starting school. On the other hand, parents seem to have thought it was not worth the sacrifice to send their over-age daughters to school, so that many simply missed school altogether.

Table 5 Education of living Ponam adults

		Men				Women			
			% with				% with		
Birth Decade	Age 1980	Mean ed.	Any ed.	Primary	N	Mean ed.	Any ed.	Primary	N
1900-09	71-80	-	-	-	0	0.0yr	0%	0%	8
1910-19	61-70	2.0yr	60%	0%	10	1.1	38	0	8
1920-29	51-60	1.8	60	0	20	1.9	62	0	21
1930-39	41-50	5.6	84	52	28*	2.0	39	9	23
1940-49	31-40	8.8	100	96	28	7.2	96	96	26
1950-59	21-30	8.8	100	100	58	8.3	100	95	44

* Although there were 28 in this cohort, these figures are based only on the 25 for whom we have adequate information.

The table also shows that just about all Ponams, of both sexes, born after 1939 completed primary school. This is the group that came of age after the War, and hence was able to take advantage of the English language primary school which opened on Ponam in 1952. Indeed, prior to the War it was not possible to get more than three years of primary schooling. That was offered by the mission school at Bundralis, and was in Tok Pisin. It is worth noting that although an English language school did open on Ponam in 1952, initially this taught only grades 1-3, and was a feeder for the main primary school at Bundralis. Gradually more grades were added, and by 1974 Ponam's school taught all primary grades. Currently a new grade is taken in every three years, so that the school teaches two grades at any one time, each of about 20-25 pupils.

We want now to look at the relationship between education and migration. We pointed out previously in this chapter that Ponams, like Manus people generally, have benefited from the availability of education, which facilitated their entry into the job market. This relationship between education and migration shows up quite clearly in Table 6, which shows that wherever it is possible to make a comparison, Ponam migrants have more education than non-migrants, and in some cases the difference is striking.

Table 6 Education and migration of Ponam adults*

		Men				Women			
		Never out		Ever out		Never out		Ever out	
Birth Decade	Age 1980	Mean ed.	N	Mean ed.	N	Mean ed.	N	Mean ed.	N
1900-09	71-80	-	0	-	0	0.0yr	8	-	0
1910-19	61-70	-	0	2.0yr	10	1.0	6	1.5yr	2
1920-29	51-60	1.5yr	2	1.8	18	1.7	16	2.4	5
1930-39	41-50	-	0	5.6	28**	1.0	15	4.0	8
1940-49	31-40	-	0	8.8	28	6.0	8	7.8	18
1950-59	21-30	7.0	10	9.2	48	6.4	18	9.6	26

* While all migrant men have worked, not all migrant women have done so.

** Although there are 28 in this cohort, these figures are based only on the 25 for whom we have adequate information.

The next table, 7, shows the relationship between education and migration in a rather different way from the preceding ones. Instead of identifying individuals by age showing their educational level and whether or not they have migrated, Table 7 is the result of an attempt to reconstruct past events. As it is so different from the other tables in this discussion, it is worth spending some time explaining how it was constructed. Using the life histories we gathered in our fieldwork, we constructed a migration chronology for each individual male. (We did not gather these data for women, as they have migrated to work less than men, and those who have migrated have worked for fewer years.) Our concern was for which decade they began to work and for which decade they quit work for good (that is, we ignored brief spells out of work). Then, decade by decade, starting with the earliest decade in which living Ponams entered work, we tabulated the number of Ponam men working at any time during that decade. The results of this are the various Ns in Table 7. For each of the men at work during that decade we computed their educational level, to produce an average educational level for all workers, new workers, and retiring workers, for each decade, as shown in the table. Finally, we ranked each job on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest (illustrative occupations are listed in an appendix to this chapter), and computed for each worker the mean rank of the jobs he held during the decade. From these we computed mean job ranks for all workers, new workers, and retiring workers, for each decade, again as shown in the table.

Table 7 Education and job rank of migrant Ponam men

	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s
All workers:						
Mean ed.	0.0yr	1.7	1.7	3.6	6.7	7.8
Mean rank	2.7	2.4	2.7	4.9	5.4	5.4
N	3	16	25	32	77	97
New workers:						
Mean ed.	0.0yr	2.1	1.7	4.6	8.6	9.4
Mean rank	2.7	1.9	2.3	4.8	5.3	4.8
N	3	13	9	21	48	30
Retiring workers:						
Mean ed.	-	-	1.5yr	2.0	4.1	5.4
Mean rank	-	-	2.3	3.2	4.4	4.0
N	0	0	14	3	10	17

In other words, Table 7 allows us to see the changing educational level and job rank for Ponam workers from the 1920s to the 1970s. Moreover, it allows us t see what the relationship is between these two variables. Before we discuss the table, however, a few qualifications need to be made. First, only three living Ponams were working in the 1920s, so we can draw no conclusions from that decade, though we include the information for whatever interest it may have. Second, our assessment of which workers were retiring in the 1970s was frankly speculative in a few cases, as data were gathered in 1979, and some men resident on Ponam who had worked previously in the decade were not sure whether they would seek work again or stay at home. Third and finally, education and job rankings are not strictly comparable over the period the table covers. Education is not strictly comparable, because a year's education in a Tok Pisin medium mission school in the 1920s is not the same as a year's education in an English-language government or mission school in the 1950s. Occupation is not really comparable for two reasons. First, occupations open to Papua New Guineans have changed over time, which means that the relative status of occupations also changes over time. Second, the real wages for many occupations increased sharply in the 1960s and 1970s.

With those qualifications in mind, what does Table 7 tell us? There are two points worth making. The first is that World War II marked a substantial change. Prior to the late 1940s, Ponams had relatively little education and relatively poor jobs, at least compared to what they had after the War. On the other hand, starting with those entering the work force in the 1950s, Ponams were fairly well educated and secured good jobs. The second point is rather more disturbing from the islanders' point of view. Since the 1950s, the mean educational level of new workers has more than doubled, while the mean job rank has remained broadly the same, whether one considers all workers or just new workers. This is concrete evidence of educational inflation, the demand that those entering particular jobs have more education than those who entered previously. For Ponams, at least, this has required greater educational effort to stay in the same general place in the occupational structure, and hence a larger and larger expenditure on education after primary school. This point is touched on again in the next chapter.

We can see, then, the overall place of education in Ponam's adaptation to colonial and post-colonial life. As the older Manus social and economic system disintegrated under the weight of colonial penetration, Ponams increasingly looked outward, away from their own region and toward the larger economic system whose impact became more and more significant. Moreover, Ponams, like many Manus people, did not become commercial producers; they did not become small-holders, merchants, or commercial fishermen. Instead, they sought employment in the growing cash economy. Fortunately, Manus people generally were advantaged in their search for work, and a significant part of this advantage was the ready availability of education. Certainly for Ponams, as well as for many other people in Manus, education is an economic necessity and resource which gives them access to well-paying jobs, and allows them to remit substantial amounts of money back home, and so maintain their society's life. The next chapter looks at this modern cycle of education, migration, and remittance in greater detail.

Chapter 3

EDUCATION, MIGRATION AND REMITTANCE DEPENDENCY ON PONAM ISLAND

Presently Ponam society is heavily involved in education, migration, and remittance. For instance, of the total number of Ponam Islanders, about 500, only some 300 live on the island, while the remainder, some 200 (about 40 percent of the whole), live away from home. Non-resident adults are mostly men and mostly in their 20s and 30s. Table 8 describes them. Migrants generally hold good jobs, and very few of the men or of the employed women have unskilled or semi-skilled work. The jobs that employed Ponams had at the end of 1979, the period of extensive fieldwork, are described in Table 9.

Table 8 Age and sex of non-resident adult Ponams*

		Men		Women	
Birth Decade	Age 1980	No. non-resident	% of surviving cohort	No. non-resident	% of surviving cohort
1900-09	71-80	-	-	0	0%
1910-19	61-70	0	0%	0	0
1920-29	51-60	3	15	0	0
1930-39	41-50	16	57	3	13
1940-49	31-40	23	82	14	54
1950-59	21-30	40	69	19	43

* While all migrant men have worked, not all migrant women have done so.

As the previous chapter described, Ponams always have had to import from elsewhere many of the things they need to survive. Before colonisation and up through the early part of this century, they acquired these goods through trade with other Manus people, in exchange for fish and Ponam manufactures. This reliance on imported goods remains striking today. As one would expect, Ponams must import for cash all their modern luxury goods: their guitars, radios, tape recorders, and the like. They must also import Western staples (tea, sugar, tobacco, tinned meat and

Table 9 Jobs of migrant Ponam adults*

Rank	Men**	Women***
Managerial Technical Professional Clerical	33	26
Skilled	19	0
Semi-skilled	14	1
Unskilled	3	2
Subsistence	3	3
Total	72	32

* While all migrant men have worked, not all migrant women have done so, and many who have worked quit on getting married or following pregnancy. Because of this, women's jobs are the last job they held, whether or not they work now, so long as they are still migrant.

** Most common: Engineers (8), carpenters (8), teachers (7).

***Most common: Teachers (11), nurses with tertiary training (6).

fish, and so on) and fishing equipment (nets, lines, hooks, and so forth). More importantly, they depend on outsiders for the vast majority of what one commonly thinks of as traditional staples. They buy for cash or get in trade for fish or cash goods almost all the starch, fruit, and greens they eat. They also import the vast majority of the goods they use for ritual exchange (rice, flour, tinned meat and fish, clothes, and lesser household utensils and goods). Moreover, most of their housing comes from outside the island (wood and thatch, as well as the obvious sheet metal). Ponams provide only the labour. They import their betelnut, leaf and lime, and generally have to purchase even their divination magic from outsiders. The only things Ponams do produce are: coconuts, which they eat or use for oil and pig food; pigs, which they sell, although only about a third of those so disposed of in 1979 left the island; canoes, although only in about half the cases does wood for hulls come from Ponam; fish for consumption and market trade; and small amounts of shell money, which they hoard for wedding exchanges.

In the face of this dependence, islanders have only the remittances that migrants send home, plus a relatively small amount of money made from selling smoked fish and handicrafts at the Lorengau market, and the wages earned by the medical orderly and the village magistrates. In this chapter I want to lay out just how dependent Ponam is on remittances, and thus indirectly on the schooling that allows islanders to migrate to well-paying jobs. I do this by looking at the sorts of economic activities that take place on Ponam, showing that in fact they are quite insufficient to support islanders at their current level of consumption. Then I show how the island's culture and social practices encourage the development of highly educated young people who are motivated to migrate and remit money. Finally in this chapter, I will look at how the very success of Ponam's system of labour export hinders efforts to develop alternative sources of income, thus in effect locking Ponam into its remittance dependency and thus into its commitment to education.

PONAM ECONOMY

Three sorts of business or economic activities exist on the island: the individual, the collective, and the corporate. Individual economic activities are those routine dealings people undertake, with or without a certain amount of labour or monetary support from others, usually close kin. Under this heading there were in 1979: six trade stores, two bakeries, one or two motor canoe operators, and over 20 pigs reared for sale. Additionally, this included dealings people have at the local, weekly markets at Bundralis and later at the market at Tulu, and to a much smaller extent at the Lorengau market.

Taken as a whole, individual economic activities drain a tremendous amount of money off the island. Operators of trade stores, bakeries, and motor canoes must spend substantial amounts of money for stock, flour, and petrol and repairs, all of which necessarily leave the island. Moreover, these activities bring in no new money, with the exception of the cash from the few pigs sold to non-Ponams and from market dealings. Regarding the local markets, however, although certain individuals may have more money when they come back from market on any particular day than they did when they set off, islanders collectively spend much more than they earn in their market dealings.

In terms of the island's 'balance of trade', then, individual economic activities produce a substantial net deficit. The effect of these activities is the circulation and subsequent dissipation of Ponam money outside the island.

The only collective economic activity on Ponam is crayfish sales, in which a number of people with complementary fishing rights (in fact, cognatic relatives of the reef owner) work to produce a catch large enough to meet an order placed from outside the island, usually from Lorengau, the provincial capital, or the Defence Force Base at Lombrum. These orders have to be larger than any individual or small group can hope to meet for the purchaser to recover transport costs, which are rather high. Thus, such sales are collaborative. Further, Ponams both carry out and think about such sales as collective transactions with the external purchaser. Proceeds are distributed to those who provided the catch, on the basis of a written record of who provided how many crayfish and of what value. Crayfish sales contributed about K1000 to the balance of trade in 1979.

Finally, by corporate activities I mean those economic activities in which a formal body collects and has more or less discretionary control over resources. There are a number of these on Ponam. First are the school governing bodies: the Parents and Citizens Association and the Board of Management. These bodies had about K700 at the end of 1979, derived from membership and school fees, and rent on the two teacher houses. Next is the island's church. In the beginning of 1979 the island stopped handing over its collection money to the parish, and the money accumulated by the end of 1979 was slightly over K100.

Third is the island as a polity, which controls that fraction of the annual provincial head tax which is rebated by the Manus Provincial Government. This amounted to about K2000 at the end of 1979. There are also the two clubs and one association on the island: the Posus Club (young men), and Nai Club (young women), and the Mataungan Association (an adult men's club only loosely associated with the Rabaul group of that name). These groups get their money from membership dues and club activities. At the end of 1979, each had between about K500 and K600.

The last corporate activity is the fish freezer. The island as a whole appointed a committee to oversee its operation and distribute the proceeds from frozen fish sales. As islanders owed a substantial amount of money on the freezer, almost all the proceeds of sales have gone to paying off the debt.

The corporate economic activities have varying impacts on the balance of trade. The school governing bodies, church, and the island as a polity all produce no new money, with the exception of K1 per teacher per fortnight in rents. The island clubs and association produce some new money, but with the exception of rent for the association's building paid by visiting fieldworkers (an extraordinary circumstance), these groups together produced only about K250 in new money in 1979. The fish freezer produced almost no new money. As I said, the bulk of the proceeds of sales has gone to pay off the loan. (The fish which have gone to the freezer were diverted from market trade and home consumption. It turns out that the money Ponams get for their frozen fish just about covers the need for additional money to buy the sago they would have got in trade for the fish, were the freezer not operating. Thus, while in the future the freezer may provide new money for the island, it is not likely that it will provide new wealth.)

Thus it is that individual, collective, and corporate business and economic activities produce on balance no new money. The net effect of these activities is the circulation of money, and its subsequent dissipation away from the island.

An adequate understanding of the island's economy, however, requires more than just a recitation of sales and purchases and bank balances. In particular, social practices on Ponam have an important impact on its economy and prospects for economic development. Egalitarian elements in its ideology, and the way the island's exchange system operates, combine to create a substantial pressure for the individual to distribute the proceeds that accrue to him from individual and collective economic activities, if they exceed immediate personal needs. Such profits as there may be from pig or small fish sales, trade store or bakery operations, or a motor canoe charter, are very quickly distributed, circulated, and thus dissipated away from the island by routine economic activities and purchases.

Conversely, there are substantial and conflicting pressures which make it almost impossible to spend money held corporately in a way that all significant factions on the island would accept. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that the only way islanders can spend such money is to distribute it equally amongst all Ponams. Yet in practice even this is not accepted, as there are a number of competing definitions of 'equally,' each with its own vocal advocates. The most straightforward and necessary expenditure of corporate money will cause protracted acrimony if islanders see any individual gaining anything at all from it. Thus, such money remains as cash in jars or balances in savings accounts.

To sum up, island economic activity taken as a whole produces a large visible trade deficit. Within this larger whole, islanders cannot retain the fairly small proceeds of individual and collective economic activities. If economic development requires the accumulation of at least some capital, then internal development on Ponam must fail. Income either must or must not be spent. Islanders cannot accumulate it and then spend it on capital projects. Thus, as I argue in more detail later in this chapter, islanders effectively are locked into their dependence on education, migration, and remittances.

To balance against their very small local income, islanders have fairly large expenses. For instance, I said previously that they lose more than they earn at the local weekly markets at

Bundralis and Tulu. A survey of Ponam households conducted at various times in 1979, and covering purchases and sales at the local markets, indicated that on the whole islanders had gross market earnings of about K1020 per year, and gross market expenditures of about K6770, for a net annual loss in market dealings of about K5750 (A. Carrier 1981: 9). A survey of trade stores on Ponam at about the same time showed total annual sales (based on estimates for the period March 1978 to March 1979) of about K13,000, of which, interestingly, about 60 percent went on food (45%) and beverages (15%) (A. Carrier 1981: 19).

So, at the island's trade stores and local markets, Ponams spend about K19,000 per year. Adding in other expenses, ranging from fishing line to secondary school fees to food given in exchanges, produces an estimate of total expenses of something like K25,000 per year. On the other hand, a generous estimate of locally produced income from all sources is about K5,000 per year. Remittances make up the difference.

Ponams living away from the island have bought, or have sent back the money to buy, almost all the island's outboard motors (more than ten at one time or another), and almost all its nets. They have paid school fees for almost all Ponam children in high school (15 in 1979 and about twice as many the next year), and have given pocket money to the 12 island children in tertiary education. They have paid for all the pigs given at major exchanges, and they make the largest contribution to the island's brideprice payments. At a more mundane level they have paid for many of the fishing lines, pressure lamps, radios, tape recorders, guitars, clothes, and dishes islanders own. Is it remarkable that Ponams say that someone without a close relative, preferably a child, working is a man who has nothing?

PONAM LABOUR EXPORT

I have said that Ponam society and its economy depend heavily on education, migration and remittances. Ponams recognise this as crucial for themselves and their way of life. To match this awareness, there exists in the society a set of mechanisms which influence migration in two important ways. There is a framework of values and beliefs parents use to decide whether or not a child should be prepared for migration, and there is a set of general practices, beliefs, and values which assures a high level of remittances from those who do migrate.

Control of migration is economically rational, and consciously so. The ideology and social practices that are the basis of that control serve to increase what islanders see as an economic return (remittances) on an economic investment (rearing a child for migration). It is for this reason that it is right to speak not only of migrating Ponams, but also Ponam labour export. I emphasise this point because it is important to understand that Ponam is not a society passively allowing or suffering the migration of its members. Rather, it is a society which actively regulates this migration, and it does so in a way which helps secure a substantial remittance income.

The economic unit responsible for this export of labour is the family, where economic and social needs are, and are seen to be, an important factor influencing migration. The decision to leave for work, the decision to migrate, cannot be explained or understood simply as the result of migrants' conscious or unconscious calculation. Parents play a central role in this decision.

Parents make their most important decision when the child finishes primary school. While examination results necessarily are important, access to secondary school is influenced strongly by parental judgement. As I note below, places in secondary school are in fact refused, primarily because of parental preferences. Further, parents are seen by themselves and others to be the ones who make this choice, and to be the ones who are entitled to make it. The child, certainly, is too young either to arrange secondary school financing without parental support, or to influence events in any important way.

To help show how the decisions made at the end of primary school are crucial, I present in Table 10 data on 119 children completing grade six in the 1970s, and to a lesser extent in the 1960s. These are all the children of all the families which had children in the primary school in 1979. The data show that certainly for girls, and to a somewhat lesser extent for boys, entry into high school separates those who migrate from those who stay home, pointing out the importance for migration and, ultimately, remittances for the parents' decision about the child's education.

Parents generally saw the matter of secondary schooling in terms of migration and remittances. Of the 21 sets of parents who were asked 'What do you want to your child to do if he fails in school?', 16 replied with some variant of 'stay on Ponam', while only five said they would try to find work or some form of further schooling for their child. Of the 74 children on whom information was gathered who did not go to high school, or who failed during high school, 36 stayed on Ponam, 16 went to one of the two vocational centres in Manus but returned home without finding a job, and one worked as a casual labourer briefly before returning to Ponam. In all, 53 of the 74 ended up on Ponam. Another 17 pursued education or work with reasonable success. Finally, four have gotten jobs with or under relatives away from Ponam (in three cases as commercial fishermen, two in a concern run by a Ponam in

Rabaul). On the other hand, of the 65 Ponams offered a place in high school, 53 accepted. Of these 53, only 14 failed, or left high school for reasons other than work. All these statistics are summarized in Table 10.

Thus, in practice as well as in the attitudes of Ponams, failure to gain admission to high school does not generally lead to a search for alternative routes to work, and does in fact tend to limit the failer's future to Ponam Island. On the other hand, the parents whose child is offered a place in high school can look forward with reasonable certainty to a successuful future for that child and some degree of financial security for themselves.

Table 10 Education and labour among selected Ponam children

High School Admissions	Males	Females	
Offered admission: accepts	29	24	
Offered admission: refuses	0	12	
Not offered	33	21	
TOTALS	62	57	(119)
Fate of Those Accepting High School Admissions			
Failed	6	2	
Withdrew voluntarily (eg. sick)	2	4	
Left at or after grade 8 for work	3	0	
TOTAL NOT COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL	11	6	(17)
Completed and took work	8	3	
Completed and took more schooling	8	9	
TOTAL COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL	16	12	(28)
STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL IN LATE 1979	2	6	(8)
GRAND TOTAL	29	24	(53)

Fate of Those Not Offered, Refusing Offer, or Failing Grade 8

		Females		
	Males	Not Offered*	Refuses	
On Ponam or out unemployed**	12	13	11	
To tech and then Ponam	6	9	1	
Casual labour and then Ponam	1	0	0	
TOTAL ON PONAM OR EQUIVALENT	19	22	12	(53)
TOTAL OUT WORKING WITH WANTOKS***	4	0	0	(4)
To tech**** and out to work	5	1	0	
Education other than just tech****	4	0	0	
To non-wantok non-casual work	7	0	0	
TOTAL SUCCESSFULLY OUT	16	1	0	(17)
GRAND TOTAL	39	23	12	(74)

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* Includes those failing grade 8.

** Those few out unemployed are generally living with relatives and helping to keep house or look after children.

*** Work secured through relatives and dependent largely upon good relations with relatives.

**** Either of the two technical-vocational centres in Manus Province.

So this decision about secondary schools is crucial to the migration sequence. Migration is justified only if the parents expect to benefit more than would be the case if the child stayed home, doing the chores, learning the valued skills, and watching over the property rights, activities which form the texture of daily living. And Ponams think migration will be of more benefit only if the child completes at least four years of high school, and thus has access to jobs which pay well enough for the child to live comfortably and still remit significant amounts of money home (several hundred kina per year).

The pattern of migration reflects these values. As I have shown, generally those not offered places at high school do not migrate on the chance that they will find work, though some pursue vocational education in the hope of being able to enter the labour force. The timing of migration reflects these values as well. If it is to occur at all, it takes place within a year of finishing secondary or tertiary education. That is, the decision is made while the child still is under parental influence, and not when the child has matured into an independent adult, which comes to sons typically in their early 30s. By the time this happens, the decision has been made and the pattern set. This is not necessarily general throughout Papua New Guinea. For example, Strathern (1972: 26) reports that the young Hagen men she studied typically migrated with little secondary education, and without informing their parents.

Family events are important as well in determining the end of employment and the return home. Of the 112 Ponam men of normal working age (about 20 to about 50 years old), only 20 have migrated and then returned home apparently for good. Of these, 14 are eldest sons or eldest socially effective males, and a fifteenth was a younger son specifically asked by his father to return. In almost all cases, they have returned after their fathers died or became ill, or became unable to care for themselves and their wives. (Only one daughter has come back to look after an aged parent.)

It should be clear, then, that family events far beyond the individual child's control influence heavily the beginning and end of the migration sequence. Ideology and practice mesh here. The child is not expected to be a free agent until he marries and begins his own family, but is held to be subordinate to the needs and desires of the parents, the heads of the family.

I want now to show how child-rearing, education, migration, and remittance are part of a rational economic system, and are seen to be so by islanders. First of all, they certainly see their child-rearing and education this way. Interviews were conducted with all families who had children in the two most recent graduating classes of the island primary school: 1976 and 1979.

When I asked why a particular child of theirs went to secondary school, or why parents in general sent their children to school, their routine response was: So the child can get a good education, get a good job, and send money home to Ponam. Of the 33 sets of parents I asked, 32 said children were sent to school so they could find paying work; and of these, 20 added that they expected their children to send money home.

If anything, these interview results understate the case. The questions were as undirective as possible, and I made no effort to ask if parents did in fact expect an economic return. And yet, almost two-thirds of parents said they wanted their child to get an education so he could get work and send money home. The most laconic answer to these questions was perhaps the most indicative: 'Get knowledge, get work, help me'.

Parents not only expect children to get work and send money home, but also, in most cases, they see the money they spend on education as an economic investment. Of course, this is not to say that all parents think about all their children all the time in these terms. When things are going smoothly - when the parents are getting remittances or have reasonable expectations of them - this interest in investment is hidden. Instead, we see two of the normal Ponam ethics invoked: first, the exchange ethic, whereby the parents helped the child and now the child, like a good Ponam, is helping the parents; and, second, the egalitarian ethic, whereby the child, again like a good Ponam, is helping the aged parents who can no longer look after themselves and their other children effectively.

The interest in investment comes to the surface in those few cases where things go wrong. One man, whose sons had succeeded in getting jobs but had failed to send home what he considered to be sufficient money, made a point of saying that he had paid his children's school fees without help from anyone, but that now, although he had asked his children for money, they had not sent any, so that he was cross. He added: 'They do not want to care for us after I paid their way through school. They think only of themselves'.

Another man, in a slightly different situation, had children who had not succeeded in getting jobs which paid well enough. When I asked him if he would send the youngest of his many children to primary school, he said: 'I am cross now, I will not pay the fees. I paid fees for all my children, and no one helped me, and now I have no one to send me money. I will not pay the fees'.

Another token of this interest in investment appears in parents' considerations of post-secondary education. Many children have gone to teachers' or nurses' training schools after finishing high school, and many parents are quite pleased with the arrangement, not just because of the relative job security offered by such training but also because it is short. The child will begin work more quickly than would be the case if he or she attended a more protracted course offered by the University of Papua New Guinea, the University of Technology or the Goroka Teachers' College.

I asked one man what he would like his youngest son to do, assuming he completed secondary school. He said: 'When he finishes Grade 10 I will think of something. But I do not like university and things which have long courses. You have to remember the money. You stay in school for five years and earn nothing. It is better to do something which takes only two years, like teacher training'. Like many parents, he wanted his child to finish schooling in the shortest time possible (and with the lowest cost possible), and yet get qualifications that would give him a secure and well-paid future. The point here is not whether or not parents would allow their children to take up a university position were it offered. Rather, it is that parents used particular values and reasoning in their discussions of post-secondary education.

I have shown that parents think of their children's education as the cost of producing a commodity that will generate a cash return. But also I need to show that parents rear their children in a way that furthers these economic goals, intentionally or otherwise. Even though parents encourage their children to get a good education and to migrate, remittances will come only if they motivate children to set aside a part of their earnings to send home. Regardless of whether or not they intend things to work as they do, many of the islanders' beliefs and social practices conspire to instil and maintain the necessary motivation.

First, islanders are constantly aware of, and constantly talk about, the absence of economic opportunity at home. For instance, they talk continually about the fact that during the Second World War the island was covered with a coral airstrip and sprayed with chemicals so that, as they argue, the ground is not suited for even minimal gardening or cash cropping. This, they believe, prevents them for earning money through copra, and forces them to spend money to buy the produce they could have grown themselves if the island's soil had not been polutted and debased. Even without using compost or fertilisers available on the island, Ponams could produce a reasonable supply of greens and a moderate number of sweet potatoes for personal consumption. Sociological and ideological, as well as strictly agricultural, factors prevent cultivation (cf. Walter 1980, for Manus in general).

Second, islanders see a threat to what they regard as their traditional fishing waters. They say that since the Second World

War the coastal people who have lived almost opposite them on the Manus coast, the Tulu people, have taken to sea fishing, and are violating their waters.

Third, they say that the Tulus, who also are their market partners, produce too few bundles of sago to meet their demands at the weekly market; set aside too little to barter for the fish that Ponams bring, and mark too many for cash sales only; charge too much in fish and money for the few they do bring; and refuse to buy fish for cash. In short, islanders see the market as operating almost entirely to their own disadvantage.

Children grow up in this unhappy atmosphere, and those who work away from home are impressed with it anew each time they return on leave. The lesson is not lost: young working men say they feel truly sorry for their parents and siblings who have no way to raise the money they need so much, and so they send cash home to alleviate the hardships of island life.

The ideologies of helping others and of equality, which I mentioned previously, also motivate those away from home to send money. Under these ideologies, children who send money are helping their parents freely, and so gain the satisfaction and respect that come from being good Ponams. Migrants, then, do not see themselves repaying an onerous and resented burden of debt, such as Mead (1963 (1930)) described amongst the Pere of southeast Manus. Sending money home is a positive act positively valued. It is not the partial cancellation of a negative social balance.

Things other than just these elements of belief and ideology help secure a return on parental investment. Ponams engage in social practices that are the equivalent of quality control devices, assuring that only certain sorts of children are encouraged to pursue education and outside work: children who are most likely to send money home. These social practices divert parental investment away from those children-as-product who are seen to be least likely to show a satisfactory return.

Parents judge how likely a child is to perform well and remit money, and as often as not they overtly cast their judgements in these terms. Parents are more likely to support their sons than their daughters through school, although a full complement of daughters is educated and goes on to outside work. Thus, as I showed previously in this chapter, of the 57 daughters who were covered in one survey and who have finished primary school, 12 were offered secondary school places but did not go, whereas all the sons offered a place went.

Ponams occasionally explain these refusals as voluntary. However, in most cases it was the parents who refused permission for the daughter to go to high school, or made it clear that they would be happier if she stayed home. They often justify this by invoking a common Ponam dictum: Daughters are a risky proposition. They are likely to be seduced away from work and into promiscuity and shame by the wily young men they will meet 'outside'. Even if, through moral fibre, she resists the snares set for her by young 'foreign' men, a daughter runs the risk of marrying a man from outside Manus, in which case, they say, she is quite likely to follow her husband, lose interest in Ponam, and not care for her aged relatives. Even parents who send their daughters to high school will relate this list of risks, but then add that they have trained her well, and judge that she will not succumb.

Although it is daughters that parents are likely to keep home, they do not explain this in purely sexual terms. Instead they consider the chances that a child will succeed and send money home. Ponams say that if parents have a child who looks particularly unreliable, irrespective of the child's sex, they will not support the child through high school, nor will they encourage the child to seek employment.

These various forms of motivation and devices for selection seem to work. As a part of one systematic questioning of parents, I gathered information on 33 children who had migrated to jobs. The parents of 26 of these said they send money regularly. Although it is difficult to get precise figures, by conservative estimate each child who does remit sends back about K250 annually, although islanders set this figure at K300 to K400, exclusive of special gifts on important occasions.

Summing up, I have shown that Ponam adults think of their children as potential commodities, and see the money they spend on education as an investment which will yield a return once the child starts working. Ponams say: 'Children are our garden, and we survive by eating the fruit'. Further, I have shown how ideology and social practice help assure a return on investment. The ideologies of helping and of equality provide a positive inducement to send money home, while the concern Ponams show toward the sorry state of the island continually reminds children that their financial support is needed. Finally, practices regulating access to high school limit investment to those children parents judge likely to send money home.

Producing and exporting educated labour is what Ponams do. Their society is well suited to this: parents think of their children in rational economic terms and many aspects of Ponam social practice help secure a return on investment. Yet I do not think that Ponam is unique in this regard. All of Manus Province has a reputation for exporting labour, as was discussed in the last chapter.

RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR PONAM

I now consider some of the risks and consequences of labour export. The first and most straightforward risk is that the island relies on a single export commodity, and its production costs are rising, as Conroy (1976) has shown, and as was discussed in the preceding chapter. Work that a primary school leaver could get was restricted first to secondary school leavers, and then to those with tertiary training. Whether or not a school is free nominally (and high schools are not even that), parents have to provide a fair amount of money to help support their children while there, and they lose the labour and social support they would have had if their children stayed home.

Further, there is evidence that the market for this commodity is shrinking. The general economic contraction of the early 1980s has affected Papua New Guinea, reducing the demand for all sorts of labour, even the highly educated labour Ponam provides. Equally there seems to be an increase in sectionalism within the country; certain sorts of jobs in certain provinces are being reserved for people from the province, though one needs to balance this against the fact that school enrolments seem to be declining in a number of provinces, thus reducing at least certain pools of educated labour (cf. Pumuye 1978). Both of these factors tell particularly hard against places which survive by labour export.

Rising production costs and shrinking markets are ordinary business risks, although they are especially serious for an economy which produces only one commodity. However, there are also a number of risks and consequences which are peculiar to labour export economies like Ponam.

The first of these is social conflict with returning workers. The evidence is that the Ponam labour force will return, and this may lead to friction between them and their peers at home over competence. Returning labourers may lack, or be seen to lack, the knowledge of local affairs and the socio-economic skills necessary for competent adults. Similarly, there may be conflict over status values (eg. Young 1977) Those returning may find themselves in a conflict over the basic values underlying status: whether education, job skills, and a background in the national sector constitute grounds for status on Ponam.

These sorts of dissonances could grow to the point that emigrants lose their commitment to Ponam, with the result that remittances would fall off, so that the profit from labour export would disappear. The island would lose both present and future income.

Aside from the risks for the future that I have mentioned, would be happier if she stayed home. They often justify this by invoking a common Ponam dictum: Daughters are a risky proposition. They are likely to be seduced away from work and into promiscuity and shame by the wily young men they will meet 'outside'. Even if, through moral fibre, she resists the snares set for her by young 'foreign' men, a daughter runs the risk of marrying a man from outside Manus, in which case, they say, she is quite likely to follow her husband, lose interest in Ponam, and not care for her aged relatives. Even parents who send their daughters to high school will relate this list of risks, but then add that they have trained her well, and judge that she will not succumb.

Although it is daughters that parents are likely to keep home, they do not explain this in purely sexual terms. Instead they consider the chances that a child will succeed and send money home. Ponams say that if parents have a child who looks particularly unreliable, irrespective of the child's sex, they will not support the child through high school, nor will they encourage the child to seek employment.

These various forms of motivation and devices for selection seem to work. As a part of one systematic questioning of parents, I gathered information on 33 children who had migrated to jobs. The parents of 26 of these said they send money regularly. Although it is difficult to get precise figures, by conservative estimate each child who does remit sends back about K250 annually, although islanders set this figure at K300 to K400, exclusive of special gifts on important occasions.

Summing up, I have shown that Ponam adults think of their children as potential commodities, and see the money they spend on education as an investment which will yield a return once the child starts working. Ponams say: 'Children are our garden, and we survive by eating the fruit'. Further, I have shown how ideology and social practice help assure a return on investment. The ideologies of helping and of equality provide a positive inducement to send money home, while the concern Ponams show toward the sorry state of the island continually reminds children that their financial support is needed. Finally, practices regulating access to high school limit investment to those children parents judge likely to send money home.

Producing and exporting educated labour is what Ponams do. Their society is well suited to this: parents think of their children in rational economic terms and many aspects of Ponam social practice help secure a return on investment. Yet I do not think that Ponam is unique in this regard. All of Manus Province has a reputation for exporting labour, as was discussed in the last chapter.

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Aside from the risks for the future that I have mentioned, there are consequences in the present. Here I deal with those which reduce the chances that the island will undergo more conventional development, and so help to force Ponam to continue to rely on education, migration and remittance. First, the large amounts of money sent home reduce financial hardship, and so reduce the pressure for further development. I am not asserting that only hunger starts businesses, but that the presence of one successful source of income reduces at least some of the pressure to find another, especially when we are talking not about one such source for the island, but one for each family that has a migrant child.

Second, because migrants send money back in fairly large amounts, the marginal value of money to islanders decreases. This is important because of the economic opportunities open to Ponams. Although the ground is poor and the Lorengau markets far off, individuals or small groups could engage in petty copra or fish dealings. By 'petty' I mean an individual return of perhaps K10 twice a year from copra, or K10 every two months or so from fish. The large amounts of money migrants send home make a marginal K10 note six or eight times a year seem relatively insignificant, and so reduce the pressure to undertake these petty dealings, especially as proceeds almost certainly would have to be distributed to kinsmen.

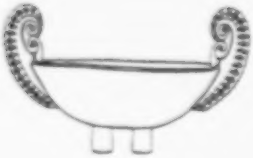
Third, and perhaps more important, the bulk of a remittance is surplus to the immediate requirements of the recipient, who therefore distributes the money within and under the rules of the exchange system. It seems likely that this deflates the social value of money, thus inflating monetary expectations within the system. This puts greater pressure on people to dissipate what money they have by sending it into the bottomless pit of exchange. Further, this strengthens the exchange system socially and makes it more significant economically. In other words, the remittances help maintain a system which inhibits the accumulation of capital, making conventional economic development more difficult.

Fourth, migrants generally send money to their own parents. This raises the economic significance of the individual relative to the community and the extended kin group. As a result, on Ponam the 'state' or centralised resources are too small to make any sustained effort to mobilise them worthwhile, especially in view of the acrimony which would follow. And in fact, even when they need money for something which quite clearly would benefit the island as a whole, people do not look to the community. Instead, they look to relatives working away from home. By reducing the significance of community resources, this return on exported labour also reduces the tendency to develop a community or centrist orientation, and thus the likelihood of generating corporate income-producing projects.

To sum up these existing consequences: the remittance system reduces the need to develop local sources of income. It strengthens the exchange system and the financial demands that it places on people. This inhibits capital accumulation by individuals. It increases the financial significance of the individual relative to the community, thus inhibiting centrist orientations, and so it reduces the likelihood of starting corporate projects requiring either capital or communal labour. In this situation it is difficult to see how more conventional forms of economic development could take place. The island's social and economic structures simply are not geared for that sort of thing. (Walter (1980) makes a similar point about Manus in general.)

Looked at in another way, the labour export and remittance system produces a set of social and economic consequences which facilitates its own continued efficient operation. By inhibiting corporate activity and increasing the social need for money, the system helps maintain the perceived poverty of the island. By strengthening the exchange system, children are encouraged to migrate to jobs and send money home.

Even though it tends to reproduce itself, the system depends too on events far beyond the control, or even the knowledge, of Ponam Islanders. Whether they will be able to maintain this system in the face of external changes remains to be seen.



SECTION TWO

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SOCIETY ON PONAM ISLAND

In Section One of this report I showed how education fits with the economy and society of Ponam Island, pointing out how the island's dependence on the main Papua New Guinea economy, a dependence induced in large measure by the consequences of colonisation, meant that it also was dependent on education to produce the sorts of young people who had privileged access to the labour market. Thus, the main focus of Section One was external, looking at education on Ponam in terms of the island's relations with the larger world.

In Section Two my main focus is internal, for I am concerned with the values and practices of Ponam Islanders, their culture, as they relate to education. I will look at different aspects of this in the two chapters in this section. The first aspect, discussed in Chapter 4, is how Ponams think the schools operate, and how they think children succeed or fail. This reflects my broader interest, which I mentioned in the preface to this report, in how societies explain educational success and failure, and it also expands on a point I made in the Introduction, Chapter 1, that we need to pay attention to the fit between the sorts of children who in fact do well in school, and the sorts of children who members of the society think ought to do well in school. As Chapter 4 will show, a good Ponam is very much like a good pupil, an agreement which facilitates the island's acceptance and incorporation of the school.

In the second chapter of this section, Chapter 5, I am concerned with a different question: How do islanders incorporate and use new knowledge? As I have made clear already, I became interested in this question because I thought it bore directly on the Secondary Schools Community Extension Project, and more broadly on the idea of Community Schools and the whole idea of community education or education for development. This is education intended to serve the needs of the people, but in practice this seems to mean teaching people new useful skills which they can use to increase the quality of their lives, in effect their economic output. As I show in Chapter 5, for Ponam these useful skills are already in place, but not used, and the chapter is an extended discussion of why they are not used. The discussion addresses a point which seems often to be ignored, that production is a social process which cannot be studied adequately without paying attention to its social, as well as its technical, aspects and context. A consequence of this is that introducing changes in production, the goal of education for development, requires more than introducing new useful knowledge or other technical aspects of production. It requires as well a careful analysis of, in fact, the way existing skills are, and are not, used in the society.

Chapter 4

TAMING THE SCHOOL: UNDERSTANDING EDUCATION ON PONAM ISLAND

This chapter addresses a question which has received relatively little attention from those studying education in Papua New Guinea: How do villagers understand or interpret formal schooling? While there has been work done on what people in this country think schooling is for (eg. Conroy 1976) and what they think Western knowledge is about (eg. Young 1977), there is no extensive body of work addressing this issue, which, as I argued in the preface to this report, appears to be of significance both for social scientists and for policy makers. There are many aspects of villagers' understanding of formal education, and here I will look briefly at just one of them, how villagers on Ponam Island explain education success and failure. My concern, however, is to go beyond the simple description of why Ponam Islanders think some children succeed and some fail. Most importantly, I want to show that islanders' understanding of education reflects in significant ways their understanding of success and failure in what is, at least ideologically, the most important area of Ponam social life, the exchange system and the kinship relations it reflects, an area which I call the kinship-exchange system.

In other words, I will show in this paper that Ponam's understanding of schooling is a result of an active process on their part. Islanders are not simply passive responders to the changes that first colonisation and then nation-building have brought about. Rather, as I have demonstrated in earlier parts of this report, Ponam's incorporation into the colonial and post-colonial order was, and continues to be, a process in which islanders participate actively. They extended, curtailed and modified their pre-existing beliefs and practices in light of changes in their circumstances, and in doing so they tamed the new order just as much as the new order tamed them. While it would be foolish to argue that Ponams were of sufficient power to have any substantial impact on the developing colonial and post-colonial system, equally the way they tamed the new order (by which I mean the way that they made their new experiences comprehensible and, in a sense, even familiar) affected their practical responses to colonial penetration. And this in turn affected the place they have been able to make for themselves in modern Papua New Guinea. Thus, I disagree with the position some commentators assume (eg. the contributors to Gordon 1981), that societies in Melanesia were swamped by colonisation, overpowered by their exposure to a set of colonising forces which they could neither comprehend nor resist. I argue, on the other hand, that societies like Ponam did not simply suffer colonisation passively. Although Ponam Island is infinitely weak compared to the forces driving first colonisation and now nation-building, nonetheless Ponams were actively involved in these processes, actively interpreting and responding to, and to some small degree contributing to, the emerging new order.

In this chapter I will present first a brief discussion of the Ponam exchange system, which I said is the most important area of Ponam life. This will lay the basis for a discussion of how islanders gain or lose esteem in exchange dealings and how people on Ponam explain differences in the ability to perform well in exchange, and thus differences in esteem. From this I move to a discussion of how islanders explain differences in ability to perform well in school. As will become clear, there are important similarities between these two different explanations, indicating that Ponams have incorporated education, tamed it, by extending a pre-existing set of explanatory beliefs to deal with it. Thus, even though schooling is objectively alien to Ponam society and culture, islanders have been able to make it their own, by explaining differences in educational success and failure in terms of explanations applied to success or a failure in the exchange system. At the end of this chapter I will discuss the significance of this for villagers' interpretation of and response to introduced formal education.

EXCHANGE ON PONAM

Ponam formal exchanges generally involve a pair of focal exchange partners. Each focal party to the exchange receives gifts from his or her relatives and gives these gifts (supplemented with a personal contribution) in his or her own name to the other focal party. The return gifts received from the other focal party are distributed in turn among those various relatives. The relatives who help the focal party give either in their own names or in the name of a known kinship linkage (**sal**) which joins them and the focal party. These **sal** are based on a named common ancestor.

These relatives who gave to the focal party, who I call primary donors, in turn have received gifts from their own relatives (to which these primary donors will add their own personal contributions). Those who have given to the primary donors, people I call secondary donors, have given either in their own names or in the name of a **sal** linking secondary and primary donors. And these second doncrs in turn have received gifts from their own relatives in parallel fashion. The image that best fits this is a pair of watersheds, each beginning with a number of small springs and streams which join to form increasingly larger streams, each set of which ultimately forms a single river which is the mass of gifts going to the focal parties in the exchange. When the focal parties complete the exchange, the process is reversed: gifts are broken up and distributed amongst the various relatives who had contributed, and these people in turn distribute what they have received amongst those who helped them (while reserving a small personal share), and so on back to the most peripheral individual donors, those who received help from no one.

What I have described is the structure of the flow of gifts in the exchange. However, in practice the exchange is much more complex. This is so because each individual is almost certain to be related to a number of different subsidiary parties to the exchange, and almost certainly will give gifts which end up at each focal party to the exchange. In other words, individuals on Ponam can and routinely do slot themselves into a number of different positions in the exchange structure.

An individual Ponam gains or loses esteem according to how well he or she succeeds in giving gifts which accurately embody a subtle mixture of: (a) the kinship relation (primarily distance) of the giver with the focal parties of the exchange; (b) the kinship relation of the giver with the immediate recipient of the gift (in fact, rarely the focal party); (c) the past and expected interactions of giver and immediate recipient in other exchanges and daily dealings; and (d) what others in structurally similar positions give to those immediate recipients. These four elements are combined, often with some difficulty, to produce a 'proper' size for all the giver's gifts, which take determinate routes from the giver to the immediate recipients, and thence on by stages to the appropriate focal party to the exchange, or to both focal parties as the case may be.

In other words, this set of calculations is performed not just once, but once for each of the significant kinship routes from the giver to the focal parties, reckoned both consanguinally and through the donor's spouse. In an exchange of any size - occuring on Ponam every week or so on average - it is common for a giver to give gifts which find their ways by three or four routes to both focal parties in the exchange.

Once these calculations are performed, yielding a set of proper gifts, the giver then performs another set of calculations, based on (a) the relative significance of the various kinship relations or **sal** , (b) the relative sizes of the various proper gifts, and (c) the giver's resources in relation to the aggregate size of all the proper gifts (especially considering whether resources are or are not less than the aggregate). This yields a set of actual gifts and immediate recipients, themselves embodying the **sal** or kin relationships the giver 'remembers' or uses.

Failure to remember all the significant linkages, failure to send the appropriate gifts along the appropriate routes to the appropriate immediate recipients, and ultimately to the appropriate focal parties, result in a loss of esteem. And too large a gift is as bad as too small a gift. We have, then, a picture of an important form of esteem on Ponam.

This form of esteem and its basis are very different from what is found often in the West, and its social range is very different. To see why, it is necessary to understand an important point: the individual performs well or ill only in terms of individual kin (Remember that an individual gives a gift in his or her own name or in the name of a **sal**, and not in the name of the specific individuals who contributed to that gift). Thus, a donor may do well in a gift to his father's sister, but poorly to a mother's brother. The result is that the donor would be seen as a good Ponam by the father's sister, but a bad Ponam by the mother's brother. It is the case, then, that esteem judgements which result from exchange are individual judgements by recipients on donors who gave to them directly. The various judgements made of a specific donor by the people who received (or felt they should have received) gifts directly from that donor need not be, and in fact seldom are, all the same. Ponams could, of course, get together, compare notes, and come to a collective judgement of each other. In fact, they do not.

This individuality of esteem judgements is more profound if we consider a number of different exchanges, rather than just one. The bulk of the factors that determine immediate recipients, proper gifts and actual gifts, is a function of who the focal parties in an exchange are and the various ways each individual Ponam is related to them. As Ponam has no bigmen, focal parties (and thus all that is a function of focal parties) are different in the different exchanges. The net result of this is that an individual Ponam will give to a different set of immediate recipients under different circumstances in different exchanges. So, across a set of exchanges, no two people are likely to have identical dealings with any other individual.

What we have, then, is a set of esteem judgements which are highly individual. Each Ponam forms an idiosyncratic judgement of a large set of other Ponams based on an idiosyncratic pattern of exchange dealings with each of those other Ponams over a longer or shorter history of exchange dealings. As a result, it is not at all impossible for some people to think that a given Ponam is forgetful and inconsiderate in exchange dealings, for some others to think that that Ponam is satisfactory, and for yet others to think that the person is all that is right and proper.

We can see, then, that an important aspect of esteem on Ponam differs in fundamental ways from esteem in the West. First, that esteem is based on conformity to a complex and subtle set of norms based on kinship and exchange. Second, it is highly localised in terms of the history of exchange dealings between pairs of individual Ponams. There is esteem, then, but there is no generalised or generalisable esteem hierarchy. Exchange dealings are too fluid and idiosyncratic to allow one to develop. (For a fuller discussion of this point see Carrier and Carrier, 1981.) This contrasts with many of the aspects of esteem in the West. There, because of the way production, consumption, and especially employment are organised, people are more likely to interact in basically the same way over and over again (for example, a foreman and a production worker in a factory, a shopper and a clerk in a store). Further, and again because of the ways life is organised, other people are likely to have similar sorts of transactions with the people being judged (other production workers in relation to the same foreman, other shoppers in relation to the same clerk). This means that in the West it is much more likely that common esteem judgements will develop.

What I have said about organised, collective exchanges on Ponam applies as well to much of daily life there. Borrowing and counter-borrowing, invocation of kinship links, and the obligations and rights they imply, are a constant theme of Ponam affairs. The structure of relationships and the structure of esteem here are similar to those found in formal exchange. In no part of the routine of Ponam life is there the basis for collective judgements and a common esteem hierarchy. Rather, in all areas judgements are personal. They are based on idiosyncratic factors and experiences, and are applicable only in terms of the relationship of the judge and the judged. As one might expect in such a society, there is no dominant group trying to maintain control over society. Rather, there is only a collection of individuals judging individuals.

So far I have described the Ponam kinship-exchange system and how people can gain or lose esteem in exchange transactions. I pointed out that given the way the system operates, there is little opportunity for a clear esteem hierarchy to develop. However, even though Ponams judge each other differently on idiosyncratic experiences and produce conclusions which usually conflict, they agree on the terms which form the basis of judgement. There is little disagreement about what makes for estimable exchange dealings, even though there is little agreement about who has earned esteem. These ideas about what makes for estimable exchange dealings are the ideas Ponams use to explain success in school. I want to discuss these ideas now.

EXPLANATIONS OF SUCCESS IN EXCHANGE

To see how esteem, such as it is, is explained on Ponam, we need to ask: What is it that underpins success on Ponam? How is it explained that some conform to the rules of the kinship-exchange system, and some do not? The answer, in typical Ponam fashion, is quite straight-forward: Knowledge (and, of course, the effort to implement that knowledge). The Ponam who conforms to the rules is the Ponam who knows his or her various kin and what the relationships with them are, and is the Ponam who, by knowing these relationships and working to fulfill them, can live up to the various rights, duties, and obligations that are a consequence of each relationship with each relative.

Two events on Ponam illustrate the importance of this knowledge. One was a wedding that went wrong: exchange gifts were returned, in-laws were shamed, the groom's father was involved in a public shouting match with an old woman whom he should have treated with respect. Several people standing and watching this shouting match - highlighted by the groom's father breaking apart a bed offered as a wedding gift - commented that the whole affair was quite shameful. As the situation was explained, the failure lay in the fact that the groom's father did not know his various kin, his kinship relationships with them, and consequently the prescribed social and exchange relationships with them. No one asserted that things turned out the way they did because the groom's father was a mortal enemy of his classificatory brother, the man who was supposed to lead the wedding work under more normal circumstances; that he was expressing his personal likes and dislikes amongst his kin; that he has been cursed or possessed; or even that he was evil. Merely, he did not know.

The other example is a funeral exchange that went off quite well, in spite of the fact that there was considerable animosity between the exchange leader (the dead man's brother) on the one hand, and on the other hand the widow, the dead man, and the man who was classificatory brother to both the exchange leader and the dead man. The exchange went off well because the leader was good at the food distribution that formed the major part of the exchange. He knew all the relevant kin, the relevant relationships with them, and all the minor obligations that had to be recalled and repaid at this exchange; and he worked hard to accommodate them all.

In both of these instances, success or failure, and thus esteem, was seen to hinge only on knowledge and effort. In order to understand, then, how one acquires esteem through knowledge, it becomes necessary to ask: How does a Ponam acquire knowledge? In other words: What is the Ponam epistemology? The securest way to learn something on Ponam is by direct sensory evidence: to see, hear, taste, or feel. However, kinship and the rules of the kinship-exchange system cannot be sensed directly. Rather, knowledge of these things can be acquired only indirectly, through talk. In matters of kinship and exchange one must listen and pay attention. One cannot be present at all the minor givings and gettings that may have to be remembered and repaid in an exchange: one must hear about them. (According to Ponam men, this is one important reason why women play such a significant role in exchange. Men say that they are more likely than women to be away from the village fishing or doing other work, and hence are less likely to witness these minor gifts and favours.) One cannot witness in any way the marriages, births, deaths and gifts that took place when the ancestors were living, and which define the vast majority of one's kinship links: one must hear about them.

On Ponam, the process of gaining this knowledge is quite simple. There is nothing mystical about the hearing, the learning, or the things known. There are no secrets or mysteries here. Ponam epistemology and ontology are quite straightforward, and Ponams see language as quite adequate to convey this knowledge. They are not concerned continually about the inexpressible or the obscure. Ponams link the learning directly to the hearing, though of course the process is not entirely mechanical: one has to be interested in what is said and attend to it. Ponams, however, do not invoke notions like 'intelligence' or 'a capacity to learn'. They have no word for intelligence. The closest they come to this is 'to be able' **(we tenan)** which refers to ability in the sense of skill or knowledge, rather than capacity or potential. Ponams do not invoke hidden realms as a route to knowledge. They do not use revelation and make only the most occasional use of divination (which, notably only one Ponam uses much, and he gains no status thereby, as I describe in more detail in the next chapter).

On Ponam, then, esteem accrues to the person who performs well in the kinship-exchange system, and good or bad performance is explained almost entirely in terms of knowledge and effort. People do or do not know the smaller exchanges or gifts that have to be considered. They do or do not know to whom they are related in what ways through which ancestors (knowledge which carries with it prescriptions for deference or dominance; joking, familiarity or solemnity; and the like). And they do or do not take the effort to act according to that knowledge. Acquisition of the relevant knowledge is, moreover, quite straightforward. One merely has to hear the stories of the ancestors, and get reports of any minor gifts or exchanges not directly witnessed. No tricks, no secrets, no mysteries. Settling any doubts does not entail subtle disputation or analysis: there are no matters suitable for interpretation or debate. One either knows or one does not.

As one might expect of a society with an epistemology like Ponam's, there is the general feeling that the older you are, the more you know, all other things being equal. This is particularly clear in relations between adults and children. An adult Ponam simply knows more than a child, and the adult knows more simply through having been alive longer, seen more things and learnt more stories. At a practical level, this respect due adults by the young is manifest in the demand for attention and obedience in children. An adult knows more, and can make a better assessment of what is right or necessary than can the child. When, then, an adult makes a demand of a child, that demand is superior to any desire of the child, within those areas where the adult is likely to know more than the child. The child, then, is expected to bow to the greater knowledge of the adult: to listen and to obey.

Moreover, Ponams think that it is by heeding the demands of parents and other adults that the child learns two important things. First, the child learns manners. The child learns to think of others, a lesson necessary in a society so heavily involved in exchange and so much concerned with the web of rights, duties, and obligations inherent in one's kin relationships with various people on the island, and so concerned with the proper forms of behaviour towards them. The child, for instance, is not told: 'Fetch water for Julianna'. Rather, the child is told: 'Fetch water for your father's sister'. And if the child's behaviour toward that father's sister is not appropriate, the child is corrected. In fact, children and their knowledge are not seen as being qualitatively different from adults and their knowledge, in contrast to many societies in Papua New Guinea and in contrast to Western society.

EXPLANATIONS OF SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

So far, I have laid out the basis of social esteem on Ponam, the dominant idea in the society. Success in the kinship-exchange system comes through knowledge and effort. It comes from knowledge of who stands in what relationship to oneself, and this knowledge carries prescriptions of rights, duties, and obligations in one's relationship with various others. And it comes from the effort to fulfil what that knowledge indicates. Knowledge and effort lie at the heart of success at the kinship-exchange system, and thus at the heart of esteem on Ponam. The route to this knowledge is overwhelmingly aural: one hears the stories of the ancestors and, in their gifts, births, and marriages, one learns to whom one is related and how. And this knowledge is straightforward. There are no secret mysteries available only to the initiate, no elaborate and subtle metaphors to be puzzled over. Things are very much as they seem and one has only to look and listen in order to know. And knowing, one has only to make the effort to act.

Ponams use precisely these ideas to account for what goes on in school, and to account for why certain children succeed in school while others fail. This is illustrated quite well in the results of a set of interviews with Ponam parents who had children in primary and secondary school.

First of all, the parents' understanding of what goes on in school is fully in accord with Ponam epistemology. The teacher talks to the children, and if they take the effort to listen, they will learn. The teacher writes things on the board and, if the children take the effort to look, they learn. Many parents seem quite sure that there is nothing mysterious about school learning. As in other areas of Ponam life, school and school knowledge involve no secrets, no subtle interpretations, no searches for hidden meanings or underlying rules and principles. The knowledge the teacher presents is perfectly straightforward, and all the child has to do is listen and look. Ponams see this listening, looking and learning as effort, as work.

This straightforward view the parents have is expressed in their common reply to the question: Why did this child succeed (or fail) in school? the first replies, generally, revolved around knowledge: the child just did or did not know enough to do well on the examination. No cursing, no intercession by the ancestors, no secret spells, no failure to grasp principles. Just knowing how to answer the question.

Of course, parents are aware that not all children have enough knowledge to do well enough in the examinations at the end of primary school to gain admission to secondary school, and it is here that we see how Ponam adults account for differences in children's performances. Children do or do not learn enough to do well in the examinations, depending on whether or not they are unruly, inattentive and unwilling to work (**maran paton**). All of the 33 sets of parents interviewed spontaneously mentioned during the course of the discussion being **maran paton**, or its opposite, **maran malemun** as the important determinant of school success. Thus, many parents would echo the words of one old man, who said that a child who is 'always quiet, obedient, and a good worker' is sure to do well in the examinations and win a place in secondary school. As another man said quite bluntly, a child who is **maran paton** 'cannot succeed in school'.

This notion that the **maran malemun** child, the good, quiet, attentive and industrious child, will succeed, while the **maran paton,** the inattentive, lazy and unruly child will fail, is quite deeply ingrained in islanders' expectations. One man who has been a teacher himself, and who is one of the most Western-oriented men on the island, was one of only two Ponams who used a word that could correspond to 'intelligence'. However, he mentioned that one of his sons would succeed in school, but not just because the child has 'brains' (Tok Pisin: **brens).** He said, 'Lots of children fail because... they have brains, but they do not listen. But lots, they only have a little brains, but if they pay attention they will succeed'. The other Ponam who referred to brains also said attentiveness was more important. Thus attentiveness, obedience, and effort, the routes to a successful adulthood on Ponam, account as well for success in school.

This shows up even more clearly in parental responses to a question asked of 26 of the 33 sets of parents: 'Why is it that some good children fail in school, while some unruly children succeed?' (Two interviews produced unusable responses, leaving 24 usable answers.) This question, placed near the end of the interview, was asked to see how parents would deal with a frankly anomolous situation. The case directly violates Ponam epistemology (because the inattentive learn and the attentive do not) as well as violating Ponam ethics (because the unruly succeed and the obedient do not). The answers were quite revealing. First, in three of the 24 interviews which produced usable answers, parents frankly were unable to answer. They clearly understood the question and wanted to answer, but could not. The anomoly was too great to be explained.

Another 12 sets of parents said that the unruly child who passed is not really unruly. He looks that way to us, but once inside the school is quiet, obedient, and industrious. They offered a similar explanation for the apparently good child who fails. Thus, 15 of the 24 could not provide an answer that violated the basic Ponam epistemology and ethic.

Three more said that this sort of anomoly was brought about by teachers who show favouritism to the children of their kin, while two said that God helping or punishing a pious or impious parent would cause this anomoly. Neither of these answers can be said to violate the basic Ponam epistemology and ethic.

Only four of the 24 usable answers approximate such violations. Two parents said the anomoly could be explained if good children were uninterested in school, or if unruly children were interested. This preserves the epistemology, but not the ethic. Finally, two simply reiterated that knowledge was the key. This seems to sacrifice both the epistemology and the ethic.

It is the case, then, that Ponam parents overwhelmingly account for success in school with the same devices that underlie their accounting of success in the dominant Ponam socio-economic activity, the kinship-exchange system. The idea that accounts for such differences in esteem as there are in kinship-exchange dealings is used as well by islanders to render the school comprehensible, and so tame the alien school.

It is important to note that in taming the school, Ponams also have appropriated it. That is, their explanation of success and failure in the school does more than just explain differences in educational performance. Rather, it does the explaining in terms of the beliefs and values which underlie the most important part of Ponam life, the kinship-exchange system. By so explaining the school, Ponams link the education system to their own society in such a way that it strengthens, at least symbolically, their own social system. They subordinate the principles of success in school to the principles of success in social life. An alien institution like the school poses a threat to villages like Ponam, for if it cannot be explained in terms of established social principles, then the power and authority of those principles are weakened somewhat. And this is in turn weakens the society which sees itself as being based on those principles. Ponam apparently has met this threat and overcome it.

CONCLUSIONS

The Ponam case suggests that whenever education is valued, as is definitely the case on Ponam (Carrier 1979), the society will try to appropriate it, by accounting for educational success and failure (and thus by indirectly portraying educational values and practices) in terms of its own dominant ideas and values. This appropriation will be attempted whether or not those dominant ideas and values in fact control educational practices and values, and whether or not those dominant values are in fact expressed in the schools.

I want now to look at two of the limitations and qualifications of the conclusions drawn from this case study. The most important is this: Even though Ponam dominant ideas (especially their notions of social esteem and their epistemology and implicit ontology) are not expressed in the school, the behavioural norms for children derived from these ideas are in fact well-suited to the practices of primary and secondary schooling in Papua New Guinea. As a consequence, Ponam efforts to account for the school and for school success do not generate a large number of anomolies, children who should succeed but fail, or who should fail but succeed.

My point is that where education is valued, an initial attempt will be made to appropriate the school in terms of the dominant ideas and values of the society. However, this appropriation need not survive. As studies of the Wankung primary school, in the Markham Valley of mainland Papua New Guinea, suggest (Smith 1973, 1975a, 1975b), too great a conflict between dominant ideas and educational practices can lead to a failure of appropriation, and a subsequent rejection of the school. Among the Amari, the group providing the largest number of children to the Wankung school, aggressive displays among boys are valued, which conflict with educational practice. Similarly, Amari cultural values and beliefs conflict in important ways with educational values and practices. The result at Wankung was a disaffection among Amari children, and the withdrawal of support for the school among Amari adults (apparently made stronger by the Amari feeling that education had little economic worth - a feeling which should reduce the need to try to appropriate the school). Though equally, apparent changes in Amari attitudes toward their school (cf. McNamara 1979:

19-22) show that just as initial acceptance can be followed by rejection, so rejection can be followed by acceptance. As I said at the beginning of this chapter, colonisation and nation-building are interactive processes.

This points to another qualification I want to touch on, the perceived importance of the school. On Ponam, as in many areas of Papua New Guinea (Conroy 1970, 1972), education is valued quite highly as the route to wage labour, the money economy, and the national sector of Papua New Guinea. As a valued thing, education is worth appropriating, from the Ponam point of view. However, were it the case that education lost its value to the society, or were it the case that education never had any value to the society, it would seem unlikely that this appropriation would take place.

This may account for the changes in the Amari attitudes toward the school, as I have hinted already. Smith (1975a) speculated that original acceptance of the school changed to rejection when students consistently failed to gain entry to secondary school. Likewise, McNamara (1979: 21) speculates that rejection changed back to acceptance with the introduction of the quota system and the subsequent success of village children in gaining secondary school places, though he does not report how they fared in secondary school. Unfortunately, there is not enough information available for us to know how the Amari now explain educational success and failure. If Smith's initial description is correct, then it is certainly possible that the more recent success of Amari children in getting into secondary school has put a strain on Amari society by rewarding the 'wrong' sorts of children, so weakening the pre-existing Amari culture and society.

These speculations on the Amari case bring out the complexity of the factors affecting a society's relationship to introduced schooling, factors which go far beyond the straightforward successful taming of the school Ponam seems to have accomplished. But the Amari material itself illustrates a point I made at the beginning of this chapter, that relatively little attention has been paid to the way villagers understand or interpret formal schooling. The evidence I have presented in this chapter suggests that this is not a simple process, a passive acceptance by villagers of yet another of the many new things thrust upon them by the by the growth of what is now the post-colonial order. It seems likely that this complex, interactive process is an important factor affecting both the overall acceptance or rejection by villagers of introduced education, and the degree to which that introduction disrupts or supports the pre-existing village social order.

Chapter 5

FACTORS AFFECTING THE USE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE ON PONAM

One technique for rural development in Papua New Guinea involves training selected students in certain knowledge and skills, and then returning them to their villages to act as agents of change and development. It is hoped that by introducing new knowledge and skills into the village, both the quality and prosperity of village life will be improved. There is evidence that many villagers themselves want this strategy to be followed (Kemelfield 1979).

Those who see education and training as a basis of change in village life quite often use arguments which imply that once the person with special knowledge and skills goes back to the village, there will be a more or less automatic transfer of the knowledge and skills to village life, and real progress will result. In more sophisticated variants, the argument refers to village-based or village-oriented education, and to practical knowledge and skills. The point, though, is the same: if the education goes right, the transfer of knowledge and skills, and the improvement of village life, will be more or less automatic (eg. Currin 1979; Kemelfield 1975; Rogers 1979; Stanton 1978).

There is some evidence, however, which leads one to see that perhaps this transfer is not automatic and unproblematic (see generally Sinclair with Lillis 1980). For instance, Kemelfield (1979: 16) reports comments that what people want is not just knowledge and skills, but ways to overcome social pressures in the village which militate against the use of that knowledge and those skills. Likewise, a commentator on a Secondary Schools Community Extension Project outstation (Vulliamy 1981: 99) notes that 'numerous students told me that they would be afraid to start a project of some kind in their village for fear of jealousy and magic...It was clear from my student interviews that simply having the skills to promote village projects was not, in itself, enough'.

This chapter is a careful look at some of the conditions surrounding the transfer of knowledge and skills to village life on Ponam Island. Thus this chapter will illustrate, for this one case, the sorts of social forces and mechanisms which affect this transfer, and will show that these mechanisms are, at least on Ponam, deeply embedded in the society's social practices, and deeply implicated in much that makes life in this society pleasant, honourable and valuable for its members.

The point of this is to provide another illustration of an argument I have made throughout this report. That is that anyone trying to understand education, or indeed any other aspect of a society, must study it in terms of the society in which it exists and the social practices which surround its use or operation. In previous chapters I have argued that Ponam's economic position, social practices, and values all shape the ways islanders think about and use the education that is offered to them. The example I provide in this chapter makes the same general point in a somewhat different and more complicated way. For here I am looking not at the schools themselves, but at the ways Ponams do, or do not, put school knowledge to use. And I am looking at a policy which is concerned not only with education, but with the ways aspects of education - useful knowledge learnt in the classroom - relate to economic activity and development in the village.

In spite of these differences, the basic point is the same. If the government of the day decides to alter the school curriculum to provide practical, village-oriented knowledge in an effort to encourage local economic development, it must remember that there are many aspects of economic activity to be considered, beyond those involving equipment and skills in production. Any policy which attempts to encourage local economic development soley by focussing on these technical aspects is likely to fail. As this chapter shows, the technical aspects can be in place, for Ponams do have the practical knowledge required to increase local economic activity, and yet economic development can fail to take place. Ponam's case, as laid out in this chapter, emphasises the importance of the social setting, values and practices in which economic activity takes place. If these are not in order, providing technical aspects of production will not have the desired effect.

I will get at this issue by considering in turn two different aspects of knowledge in Ponam society. The first is what can be called the formal aspect: What is the position of those associated closely with the formal attainment of formally organised knowledge? The only source of substantial formally organised knowledge for Ponams is the school system. The group I will use in this investigation of the formal aspect of knowledge consists of retired teachers on Ponam. This group is quite well educated in village terms, and their position as teachers serves further to associate them with formal knowledge.

Two questions will be investigated regarding this group. The first relates to Ponam values: What evidence is there that close objective association with formally organised knowledge serves as a basis for respect and social status? The second question relates to Ponam social practices: What evidence is there that ex-teachers are significantly over-represented in positions of authority? Answers to these two questions will allow some understanding of the relation between formal knowledge and position in the social system, and thus will shed some light on how school knowledge and the people who have it are seen on Ponam.

As I shall show, being a teacher, being associated closely with the formal attainment of formally organised knowledge, does not confer status in terms of Ponam values. There is no sort of knowledge, the sheer possession of which earns the possessor esteem or authority. This is because of the way Ponams see knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge, something I discussed in the preceding chapter and will deal with in this chapter at greater length.

I then will address the informal aspect of knowledge in Ponam society. The concern here is not with the sheer possession of knowledge. Rather, it is with how practical, informal knowledge - especially skills - relates to Ponam daily life, and especially informal exchange and transaction practices. As will become clear, practices relating to informal knowledge are such that the person who possesses a new and useful piece of knowledge is not likely to use it. Being known to have such skill or knowledge is, in fact, a source of cost and strain for the individual. So, people who have these sorts of things are reluctant to use them.

In other words, this chapter shows that in Ponam society neither the formal possession of formally organised knowledge, nor the informal possession of practical knowledge useful in daily life, puts a person in a position to act as an effective change agent. The transfer of new knowledge into the society and its application is quite uncertain. And this is the case in a society which is not at all like some mythical archetype of the hierarchical, tradition-bound society dominated by backward-looking elders. Rather, Ponam is an open and egalitarian society, conscious of, but in no way blindly adhering to, its own way of doing things.

In a larger sense, this case study will show that any attempt to transmit new knowledge to a society, with the goal of having that knowledge incorporated and used, is dependent on much more than just the content or utility of that knowledge - especially as these are conceived in terms of the technical needs and practices of that society. The transmission of new knowledge is equally dependent on the social structure and practices of the society which is supposed to receive the knowledge.

If a society, like Ponam, is resistant to incorporating certain sorts of new knowledge, it is resistant in large measure for reasons relating to the society itself. To modify substantially that resistance one would have to modify substantially the society. In a society, like Ponam, where much is admirable in terms of the self-professed values of Papua New Guinea, and in a society, like Ponam, which is proud of and values its own social practices, it becomes questionable whether the attempt to break down resistance to certain sorts of new knowledge should be made. Ponams are well educated, and pleased to be so. In effect, Ponams themselves have decided how to use what they have learnt.

RETURNED TEACHERS ON PONAM

Teaching has been common as an occupation for Ponams, though it appears that this is more the case in the past and in the church schools and at the primary level, than in the present and in the administration schools and at the secondary level. As Table 11 shows, about a third of living Ponam men born in the 1930s were teachers at one time or another, while comparable figures for those born in the 1940s and 1950s are lower. This table also shows that almost half of the Ponam women born in the 1940s who worked have worked as teachers at some time or another. Again, the group born later, in the 1950s, shows a lower proportion of teachers.

Table 11 Education of living Ponam adults, comparing teachers and others, 1979

		Not Worked		Worked, Not Taught		Taught		Teachers as percent of	
Birth Decade	Age 1980	Mean Years Educ.	N	Mean Years Educ.	N	Mean Years Educ.	N	Peers	Workers
MEN									
1930-39	41-50	-	0	4.3yr	19*	8.0yr	9	32.1%	32.1%
1940-49	31-40	-	0	8.7	24	9.3	4	14.3	14.3
1950-59	21-30	7.0yr	10	8.9	44	12.0	4	6.9	8.3
WOMEN									
1940-49	31-40	5.9	15	8.2	6	10.2	5	19.2	45.5
1950-59	21-30	6.5	23	9.2	15	12.8	6	13.6	28.6

* Although there are 19 in this cohort, these figures are based only on the 16 for whom we have adequate information.

Although teachers form a declining proportion of each subsequent age group, these age groups have themselves been getting larger. The result is that the number of Ponams who have worked as teachers has risen from six during the 1950s to 22 during the 1970s. Given a total adult population of 272, this means that during the 1970s one adult in 12 worked as a teacher, while overall about one adult in ten has worked as a teacher at some time in the past.

It turns out that only one female and five male teachers have found their ways back to the island, all of them former primary teachers. Because there is only one female in the group, and because women's access to status and authority is different from men's, she will be excluded to make the analysis simpler. So, I will be talking about the five male former primary school teachers now on Ponam. As Table 12 shows, these five are better educated than their resident peers. For those born in the 1930s the difference is striking.

Table 12 Education of resident male ex-teachers and their peers

		Never Worked		Worked Never Taught		Ex-Teacher	
Birth Decade	Age 1980	Mean Years Educ.	N	Mean Years Educ.	N	Mean Years Educ.	N
1930-39	41-50	-	0	1.9yr	8	6.5yr	4
1940-49	31-40	-	0	6.5	4	9	1

The returned teachers on Ponam do not occupy positions of authority disproportionately. This is the central fact in this discussion of ex-teachers, and I want to establish it securely. First, in village affairs ex-teachers are not deferred to in any special way as ex-teachers. If an occasion for difference does arise, it does so for reasons other than the former occupation of these ex-teachers. The one case where former occupation may be important is that of the head of the school Board of Management during 1979. In general, however, islanders said that they supported this man because he is a good man who works hard. They did not say they supported him because he is an ex-teacher expert as an after-thought or on being asked. In any event, his status as an ex-teacher gives him particular competence regarding the operating of schools, not general competence outside the mechanics of school management.

Further, those who are ex-teachers make no claims to authority based on what they used to do. On the very rare occasions of a Ponam claim for deference or of competence, the claim is based on ascribed status (hereditary clan leader, for example; no ex-teacher has any ascribed status of this sort). Or, it can be based on practical experience in the area in question. These sorts of claims are made very rarely on Ponam, and are effective even more rarely. Claims of competence, in any event, are never general. Neither a former teacher nor anyone else would claim competence in any area not directly related to that person's practical experience, narrowly construed.

In addition to this general description of the position of ex-teachers, there is a more quantifiable measure of the power or authority of returned Ponam teachers. This measure is the distribution of positions of authority in the society. What this measure shows is that former teachers are not dominant in Ponam village life.

There are three sorts of positions of authority: hereditary clan leadership (14 resident males are recognised or disputed claimants), official elected government positions (village leader, magistrates and other court positions, and school officials: a total of 13 offices), and elected non-official positions (leaders of two village clubs or associations, the church leader, and the catechist - this last is marginally an elected position). These positions of authority are lumped together in this analysis because in Ponam society all offices, including hereditary offices, are distributed approximately uniformly. Thus, there are 31 positions distributed amongst 64 resident adult males. Of these males, 36 hold no position, 25 hold one position, and only three hold two positions. (These three are, respectively, hereditary clan leader and catechist, hereditary clan leader and elected village leader, and head of the school Board of Management and leader of an association.) In effect, holding a position as hereditary clan leader bars a person from holding an elected position.

The most revealing way to compare ex-teachers and others is to consider those of about the same age. All the ex-teachers in Ponam were born in the 1930s and 1940s. If we compare the ex-teachers with the other resident Ponam males born in those two decades, we find that three of the five teachers (60%) hold positions of authority, while eight of the 13 non-teachers (62%) hold positions of authority. Thus we can see that when the effect of age is taken into account, ex-teachers and non-teachers have almost exactly the same chance of holding positions of authority.

The situation is, then, that ex-teachers are not given any special deference by virtue of the fact that they are formally associated with education. Being a certified teacher does not provide a basis for authority as it does so often in the West. Likewise, I have shown that members of this group of ex-teachers do not in fact have special access to positions of authority. In other words, those who are recognised as possessors of formal knowledge on Ponam (that is, possessors of school knowledge), do not have the deference or the authority which could help enable them to introduce new knowledge and skills into the society (contrast this with teachers' self-perceptions as discussed by Wohlberg 1979).

Although it is possible to argue that the lack of deference and authority held by ex-teachers is a consequence of the relatively high levels of education on Ponam, and by the relatively large proportion of Ponams who are or who have been teachers, I do not believe that such an argument explains the situation adequately. Rather, to see why teachers in particular, and the formally educated in general, are not given deference or authority, we need to look at the place of knowledge, formal and otherwise, in Ponam society.

Basically, if a possessor of knowledge in any society is to be respected and given status because of the knowledge possessed, then that knowledge must be in some way special. In the next section of this chapter I will show that teachers' formal knowledge is not special on Ponam, and indeed that no knowledge, not even religious knowledge, is special on Ponam. I will do this by looking at what Ponams think about how knowledge is acquired, and what Ponams think one can do with knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIETY ON PONAM

The first matter that needs to be dealt with is access to knowledge. In many societies, possession of knowledge makes the person special, because access to that knowledge is restricted, or thought to be difficult. Thus, for instance, in some societies the acquisition of knowledge effectively requires some wealth - as is the case in many parts of the West. In some societies, one has to be of a certain age or sex to gain important knowledge. In some societies one must be seen to have a special inner quality or calling to gain important knowledge. However, as my discussion in the preceding chapter indicates, Ponam is not like this.

On Ponam, access to knowledge is about as unrestricted as it could be. Unlike many societies in Papua New Guinea (eg. Barth 1975; McLaren 1975), on Ponam there is no knowledge which is available only to those who are members of formal status or age-related groups. Moreover, the informal status and age-related groups do not restrict access to knowledge either. That is, with a few trivial exceptions, there are no formal or informal devices on Ponam which prevent knowledge being acquired by anyone who wants it.

Even knowledge which might be thought to be special in some way is not restricted. For instance, knowledge of divination techniques - the most 'magical' sort of knowledge Ponams have - is not restricted. Anyone can learn this knowledge, though only three people on the island (all men) have done so. This small number is a consequence of a lack of interest, probably coupled with an awareness of the social costs which the possession of such knowledge might entail (discussed in the next section of this chapter). The small number is not a consequence of formal restrictions. Of the three people who have acquired that knowledge, the only one who uses it very much is a young single man of no particular distinction, who goes out of his way to assure others that his knowledge is not the result of any special merit or aptitude. Rather, he asserts it is the result of accident: his brother got very sick, and no diviner was available to locate the cause of the illness. The other two who possess this knowledge are old men, and semi-withdrawn from public life, and one of them no longer uses his knowledge at all.

Further, there is no sort of knowledge which is seen to require the mastery of another sort of knowledge. That is to say, knowledge is not seen as being ranked in a hierarchy or ladder of perceived difficulty or importance, and hence of perceived status. This sets Ponam apart from many societies in the world, where certain sorts of knowledge have to be learnt in sequence: you cannot learn calculus it is said in the West, before you have learnt algebra.

There are, then, no formal or informal social restrictions of any consequence on access to knowledge. In no sense are there obstacles which inhibit those who desire to learn. This openness of knowledge is paralleled by Ponam notions of epistemology, of how people learn things. As I said in the preceding chapter, Ponams hold that the best and most secure way to learn is by direct observation. If you want to know, then you must look and listen. This seems obvious, until one remembers what is excluded. Ponams do not hold that people in positions of authority are automatically a source of valid knowledge (eg. they do not believe that a hereditary clan leader has any special sort of knowledge), or that revelations or visions are a secure source of knowledge. Nor do they think that appearances have to be interpreted or discounted in any way. Dreams and divinations are recognised, but they are seldom used, and are treated with some suspicion especially dreams. Moreover, dreams and divination are used to gain knowledge only of the realm where direct observation is not possible: the goings on of the ancestors. Thus, they are used to complement, rather than to supplant, direct observation.

When direct experience of events is not possible - when one has to rely on what others say - Ponams look first of all to those who have had direct experience, and who are known by past experience to be trustworthy. Again, reliance is placed on direct sensory experience, though here it is the direct sensory experience of a reliable other person.

This buttresses the point made in the last chapter, that access to knowledge on Ponam is quite simple. There are no social restrictions on knowledge, in the sense that there are no group secrets attached to people of a certain age, sex, or other social grouping. Further, no special skills or abilities are required if one is to learn. Ponams see knowledge as the direct result of experience, though one can rely at need on the verbal reports of reliable people who have had direct experience. From the Ponam point of view, then, the man, like the resident ex-teacher, who has a great deal of knowledge is the man who wanted to learn, the man who has been interested in and attended to what he saw and heard himself, and what he was told by others. Unlike the man of knowledge in the West, he is not seen to have any special aptitude, ability, or status desired by others. He was just interested and attentive.

I have said that Ponams do not think that a man with a great deal of knowledge has demonstrated any special ability. Knowledge is easy to get: anyone can do it. Thus, the educated man can lay no claim to special status based on the fact that he has learnt a lot. In other words, showing the ability to acquire a great deal of knowledge by the possession of a great deal of knowledge does not get a man status or authority.

I want now to deal with another and related question: Does the knowledge that a man possesses allow him to do anything special? That is: how much do Ponams think that having knowledge allows one to control events? On Ponam, knowledge is seen to be useful, is seen to grant the knower a certain capability, but of a very limited sort. The capability that is acquired through knowledge is on the same order as that gained through technical skill. It allows one to perform a particular and limited task. Thus on Ponam, knowledge is seen to have no applicability outside the narrow realm in which that knowledge is acquired and used, though that knowledge is, of course, useful within that realm.

This is clear in discussions with Ponams about the knowledge children gain in the classroom and what it is good for. Ponams say classroom knowledge is suited only to classroom tasks, and particularly the passing of examinations. With two important exceptions, this knowledge is seen to have no general use outside the classroom, and it does not in any important way make one a better or more worthy person. Likewise, there is no evidence that Ponams see school knowledge as anything like the fundamental key to Western, urban life (contrast with Smith 1975a; Young 1977). Rather, Ponams are aware that the key is a good job that pays well.

The important exceptions to this idea that school knowledge is applicable only to school activities, concern literacy and numeracy. These are recognised as quite useful in many situations outside the school. However, it is not the case that these are valued in and for themselves. Rather, they are seen to be like many other sorts of knowledge, useful if you have call to use them. A number of older Ponams say that they learnt to read and write Tok Pisin in the mission school at Bundralis before the Second World War, but no one wrote letters to them, and there was no one to whom they wanted to write letters, so they lost the ability. In general, these people showed no particular regret. It was simply a skill which they had lost through disuse.

The case is, then, that the man who returns to Ponam with a great deal of knowledge is a man who is in possession of something which, with few exceptions, is of no particular use in daily life. Knowledge and skills suited to the daily round on Ponam are most likely to be acquired by living the daily round on Ponam. The few exceptions are those skills or special abilities which are found useful both on and off Ponam, such as rough carpentry. But for all these sorts of things, excluding literacy (and numeracy to some degree), a person will acquire sufficient knowledge through the normal course of events on Ponam.

By no means is this attitude toward knowledge found everywhere in Papua New Guinea or elsewhere. In many places, and especially in the West, much knowledge is seen to be important in and for itself, and not only for its applicability to a mundane, practical realm of existence. In many places, the desire to find out for the pure pleasure or power of knowing, the acquisition of knowledge for the sheer possession of a valued good, is real and strong. The whole tradition of the liberal arts education in Western universities is token of this. Having a liberal arts education suits one for no occupation, but is seen to be valuable for making the individual 'well-rounded', with a 'broad, liberal outlook'.

Contrast this with Ponam views. Knowledge is unimportant if not useful. Knowledge of the name of every sort of fish is something one may have after years spent fishing and hearing the names of fish. But it is not seen to be good for anything. It does not make one a better fisherman or a more useful person. Its only use is that one can refer to the fish in one's catch or in one's experience by name, which is easier and surer than description. But even this is of limited utility, because many people might not know the names of the rarer fish.

I have said so far that men of knowledge on Ponam have no special status. Their acquisition of knowledge, Western or Ponam, is not seen to be a particularly difficult task, and the knowledge that they have acquired is not felt to be good for very much except a few fairly specific tasks. Thus, being men of knowledge gets them nothing in particular.

Having said that the man of knowledge on Ponam has no special status, I want to modify this statement a bit, but in a way which will not affect the basic point. I said that literacy and numeracy are recognised as useful, school-based skills. It is also true that those in positions of authority, and especially those holding elective positions, are expected to keep records and accounts, to deal with correspondence and forms, and so forth. This suggests some sort of correlation between education and authority, but a correlation which is indirect. Such a correlation does in fact exist. I want to deal with that correlation now, and show that it does not affect in any significant way my assertion that the man of knowledge holds no special status and has no special access to authority.

Basically, only a minimum of education is necessary to make a Ponam literate, at least in the way that islanders define literacy. However, those who do not have this minimum are denied positions of authority. Of the 63 resident adult males, 14 have no education at all. Of these, 11 were born before 1930, and three were born in the 1930s. The large majority of Ponam men born in the 1930s, and all Ponam men born after 1939, have gone to primary school at least, as have almost all the women (see Table 5, in Chapter 3 of this report). Of the 14 resident adult men with no education, only three (21%) hold positions of authority. In all three cases, they hold hereditary clan leadership. On the other hand, of the 49 with any education, 25 (51%) hold positions of authority. Clearly, the totally uneducated are not elected to positions of power and authority.

However, this is not the same as saying that there is a straightforward association of education with positions of authority. If we look at the 49 resident adult males with any education, we can see how this is so. Excluding those males with no education, a mean education figure was computed for each birth decade (because of skewing, a median was used for the 1930s). Using this mean figure, those in each decade were classified as having above or below that decade's mean. Put more simply, those with education were divided into high and low groups, controlling for age.

This operation produced 21 with above average education, and 28 with below average. Of the 21 with above average education, 11 (52%) had positions of authority, and ten did not. Of the 28 with below average education, 14 (50%) had positions of authority and 14 did not. In other words, for those with any education at all, which is 78 percent of the resident adult males and all adult males born after 1939, there is no relationship between level of education and having a position of authority.

Add to this lack of association one other fact. It is not uncommon for people with no education to be nominated for elective positions of authority. However, it is common for such people to refuse the nomination on the grounds that they cannot read and write, and thus would be unable to carry out the duties of the office. This bit of ethnographic evidence, coupled with the finding that the less educated are as likely to hold positions of authority as the more educated, shows that the relationship between education and authority is peculiar.

It cannot be denied that there is such a relationship. However, that relationship is not straightforward. Any education is enough, because only literacy and numeracy are at issue. (In any case, all Ponam men under 40, and almost all under 50, have enough education to qualify as literate and numerate.) From the Ponam point of view, only technical skills are at issue, skills of reading and writing. General 'knowledge' or 'insight', the sorts of things which might be held to accumulate with education, are immaterial. It is for this reason that it is true to say that on Ponam, the man of knowledge is not given special status. And because these sorts of people are not given special status, they are less likely to be able to be good agents to change. Simply, they do not have the respect or authority to force through changes, or even to get people to consider particular changes.

INFORMAL KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIETY ON PONAM

I want now to look at informal knowledge on Ponam. Technical knowledge or skills is the most significant form of such knowledge in Ponam society, given my concerns in this chapter. Even though formal knowledge does not, as I have shown, provide a basis for status or authority which might be used to help incorporate new knowledge into the society, it is possible that knowledge of special techniques may spread of its own accord, so to speak as people see its usefulness, and learn it for themselves. In other words, those without authority or status of a special sort may be able to spread the new knowledge by example.

There is no shortage of new sorts of special knowledge on Ponam. Returning Ponams have brought with them a vast quantity of the skills and knowledge associated with specialist occupations, and Ponams coming home on leave bring even more. These range from the mundane carpentering and plumbing which many Ponams have done, to the highly esoteric skills of government administration, radio announcing, and underwater salvage. Although the former are more suited to Ponam life than the latter, it is true that skilled Ponams who return to the island do not use their special knowledge, even though islanders' lives could be made easier and better in islanders' own terms by the simple application of a few available bits of knowledge. Why is it that these are not used?

I want to mention first something which has a bearing on this, though the significance of this will become fully apparent only later in this chapter. Before the Second World War, many techniques were owned by individuals and groups. Using these sorts of skills required not only the mastery of the skill itself. It required also getting the right to use the skill, or permission of the owners of the skill. In short, something like a guild structure existed. The right to use certain skills remains restricted in this way. Lime baking and different sorts of fishing are examples. I want to emphasise, however, that this restriction is not on the knowledge itself. Rather, it is on the use of that knowledge, and now especially on the use of that knowledge for personal gain: to produce goods for trade or sale. Thus, for example, using restricted fishing techniques to catch a few fish to eat oneself would not cause censure. Using that same restricted technique to catch fish for sale would be a major breach of the rules and could easily result in court action.

This sort of restriction is not applied overtly to the new knowledge people are acquiring. However, it is possible that this influences the way people think about newly acquired technical knowledge. In this regard, I should mention here what is taken up again at the end of this chapter: Ponams are concerned that the island's business operators get a proper government license. Licensing may, in this case, serve as an authorisation that the skills are used legitimately.

There is one more definite and more important reason why useful knowledge acquired off-island is not applied in the society: Ponam practices of informal exchange and related values of equality make exercising special skills a social, and often a financial, cost to the individual, rather than a benefit. I do not suggest that this is a result of conscious intent. But I do assert that it is what in fact happens. And because it happens, it sets up expectations and ways of doing things which reduce the chances that anyone who acquires new skills will try to exercise them.

Possession of useful knowledge on Ponam is admirable. A man who is seen to be particularly good at sharpening axes, for example, is admired for that. I noted earlier that this does not confer status, and in fact it usually does not lead to emulation. Most people, to continue the example, know how to sharpen an axe well enough for all practical purposes. So, they will not go to the especially skillful man to acquire skill for themselves. Why should they?

However, there may come a time when this skill is needed. An axe may become badly nicked, or the blade otherwise damaged.

Then, if your relationship with the especially skilled man is appropriate, you go to him and ask him to repair and sharpen your axe. After all, he is quite good at this. If you are of the appropriate relationship, you are almost guaranteed that he will do the job for you. He would refuse only if he were quite angry with you or if there were some exceptional circumstances.

So, this man has applied his knowledge, and used his time and energy, to sharpen your axe. But under the Ponam system of informal exchange, he gets nothing in return, for Ponams do not use the notion of debt and accounting in informal exchange. Rather, all such acts of helping are seen formally as free gifts. If you ask him for help, he gives it to you (if you two are in the appropriate relationship); and that, officially, is the end of it.

In addition to this official ideology of the free gift, however, Ponams do operate a system of informal calculation. If I give to you, it may be a free gift officially. But in fact, I am aware, as are you, that in some general sense you owe me. Thus, in practice, there is a system not of free gifts, but of exchange, an exchange which marks and re-creates a certain sort of social relationship. In other words, if I give to you, I do not expect a specific repayment for this specific gift. Rather, I expect that at some time in the future you will help me (but, of course, that will solidify our relationship, and so will form an obligation on my part to help you still later in the future).

So, under the Ponam informal exchange practice, I can expect no specific repayment from you in return for my sharpening your axe. Rather, I can expect that at some time in the future you will help me. But, I could expect that future help from you anyway, because you and I are in that sort of relationship, a relationship which is independent of any specific routine gift or counter-gift. (If we were not in that sort of relationship, you would not have come to me with your damaged axe in the first place.) So, even though we are in what is technically an exchange relationship, I can expect nothing specific in return for having helped you with your axe. I have spent my time and energy for no concrete return.

In general, Ponams are not at all bothered by this, and indeed they are quite proud of their system of informal exchange. There is continual and quite willing helping and counter-helping, generally without thought of repayment. But this is in part a consequence of the distribution and nature of routine specialist knowledge used on Ponam, and the nature of the informal exchange system in which these skills are used. Most such specialist knowledge is fairly widespread. Not everyone knows a great deal about axe repair and smithing, but such knowledge is not at all rare. Moreover, for such established specialist knowledge, a demand exists only as new instances of need arise. That is, a specialist axe repairer only has to deal with axes which are newly damaged. There is no large unsatisfied demand for such skills. Finally, the application of routine Ponam specialist knowledge does not require the use of money. Existing materials are sufficient in all but the most unusual cases. With such a distribution of specialist knowledge, and with such sorts of specialist knowledge, application is possible quite conveniently within the informal exchange system.

But a person with new useful knowledge is quite likely to be in a situation very different from that described in the last paragraph. Take the example of the Ponam man who can repair metal dishes. Unlike routine specialist knowledge, dish repair is not widespread. He is the only man who knows it. So, everyone with a metal dish with a hole in it must go to him for help. Again unlike routine specialist knowledge, our dish repairman is not in demand only as new holes in dishes are discovered. Rather, Ponam has a large supply of dishes needing repair. So, there is a backlog of demand for his skills. And again unlike routine specialist knowledge on Ponam, dish repair requires goods which cost money (especially solder).

What happened in the case of the dish repairman? A large number of people came to him with damaged dishes and asked for help, and they came very often because there was a large unsatisfied demand for his skills. Repairing a single hole in one dish requires relatively little time and cash goods. So, each individual with a damaged dish feels that request for repair is a request for a fairly small favour, which is true. However, what is a reasonable request from the point of view of each Ponam with a damaged dish, is a mass of requests, and a massive demand for time and cash goods, from the point of view of the repairman.

Under the rules of informal exchange, the repairman should honour most of these requests, and he cannot demand specific repayment. Moreover, it is unlikely that he would be able to get money back, even when these people help him at some unspecified time in the future. Rather, he is likely to get fish, or a few betelnuts. Both of these he is able to get for himself, and neither of these can be presented at a store in payment for solder.

So, our repairman has only two choices. First, he can give lavishly of his own time and money - neither of which he has in excess. Second, he can refuse to repair dishes, including his own (for being seen to repair any dish will lead to new requests for help). There is no middle choice, and Ponam values and exchange practices inhibit any efforts to circumvent the dilemma. The man stopped repairing metal dishes.

Another man let it be known that he could make simple repairs on radios and cassette players, and found many people asking for help. But he found that he was fixing these at night, using kerosene for his lamp. And he had to use his own batteries when he made repairs. He got no money for his repair work, and he too was, therefore, in a position where his help cost him large amounts of time, and money which he had no realistic chance of recovering.

For both of these men, and for anyone else bringing a new and useful skill to the island, a flood of requests for help results, each one hard to refuse. Nothing is seen to come in return, and a cash expense is incurred. In such situations, the normal operation of the informal exchange system does not lead to an 'adequate' return for the time, energy, and money spent, and people stop using their skills. Metal dishes and radios are no longer repaired, and the reputations of these two men have suffered a bit. What these examples show is that the introduction of such new knowledge and skills entails not simply the introduction of new labour knowledge, a technical aspect of production, but the introduction of a new social context of production, a new division of labour, radically different from what the society has now.

This lesson is not lost on Ponams who may have skills or want to try new knowledge. One young man said he has some useful skills, learnt when he was working away from the island. But he is keeping them to himself, because only hard work and trouble would result if he used them. Another man, thinking of trying a small garden, said he knew it would be useless. Even if he could improve the bad Ponam soil to the point where something would grow, all his relatives would come and ask for the produce. So, he did not try very hard, and his garden failed. He has not tried again.

The situation itself creates expectations, or lack of them. When specialist knowledge is needed islanders do not look to each other. When the Ponam freezer needed repair, no one thought of asking the Ponam refrigerator mechanic who would be coming home on Christmas leave to bring a set of tools. Rather, a government repairman was brought in eight months later, at a cost of K100. And of course the freezer could not be used during that time.

In this situation then, there is resistance to the application of new knowledge and especially useful new skills. This resistance, however, can not be laid at the feet of 'traditionalism' (whatever that is), or 'conservative village elders'. Rather, that resistance is the unintended consequence of Ponam ethics and practices relating to formal exchange. As I have noted in a previous chapter, these ethics and practices also help maintain a society which is egalitarian, and in which the old, the ill, and those with few resources of their own are looked after quite well.

CONCLUSIONS

We can sum up the position of possessors of formal and informal knowledge on Ponam quite briefly. First, Ponams' view of how knowledge is acquired is such that the person who acquires a great deal of formal knowledge does not show any particular ability, and thus can make no claim to any special status in the community. Second, for Ponams neither formal nor informal knowledge has applicability or utility outside of a very restricted, primarily practical, realm.

Further, the person who has informal knowledge and uses it finds himself faced with requests from others for help. But under the Ponam system of informal exchange, the person who has new and useful informal knowledge is likely to see the use of this skill as hard work without recompense - as a drain on his time, energy, and money: as an expense. As one might expect, in such a situation people are hesitant to apply the knowledge they have, for fear that others will see the results and ask for help.

This case study shows that the position and role of formal and informal knowledge in village societies can be quite complex. Any simplistic attempt to incorporate new knowledge into a society like Ponam, based on naive notions of the place and role of knowledge production in society - notions which are, in fact, not even valid in the West, where they originated - is almost certain to fail, and to generate conflict and resentment in the process.

To close, I will consider how one might go about trying to transfer new knowledge into a society like Ponam. I will do this by looking at one Western skill which has been introduced successfully. Before doing so, however, I need to enter a qualification: I have looked in this chapter only at factors directly affecting the place and use of knowledge on Ponam. I have had to ignore larger social and economic facts which help determine whether or not certain knowledge is desired or would be desirable on Ponam, and I have had to ignore the ways that property rights of various sorts might affect the trouble-free adoption of introduced knowledge. It has not been my intent to deal with these sorts of matters, nor has it been necessary to deal with them, and I have not done so. It should not be necessary to note that any project to introduce knowledge into Ponam society, or any other society for that matter, would have to involve a careful consideration of these points.

The successfully introduced knowledge I will look at is baking. There are two drum ovens working on Ponam, though more than two people bake with these ovens. These are running as businesses, making a profit, and are seen to be beneficial to the island. There are two important points to be made about these drum oven bakeries. The first is that knowledge of baking is common on Ponam. Most of the Ponam girls who do not go to high school are enrolled for two years at the vocational centre for girls at Bundralis, on the Manus mainland opposite Ponam. All of these girls learn how to make bread and rolls. It is worth noting, though, that only one of the two bakeries is run by a woman who has been schooled in baking. The other is run by a woman with no formal education at all. This points out the fact that it is not simply the formally educated who learn new useful knowledge.

If knowledge of baking were not common, it seems likely the situation would resemble that of the dish repairman: too large a demand made on one individual for the use of that knowledge. Because knowledge of baking is widespread, and people other than the actual owners of the ovens do bake in those ovens fairly often, no one individual is faced with a large, persistent demand. Work can be undertaken when desired, not when others make demands.

The second important point is that these two bakeries are licensed by the provincial government, and to some degree are seen to come under its oversight. It is quite likely that this puts these bakeries into a position parallel to that of the restricted traditional skills: a guild-like position. In a sense, these bakeries are treatd like recognised businesses, the fruits of which are not subject to the rules of informal Ponam exchange. Rather, baked goods are for sale only, and are seen to be for sale only, and there is no resentment at this. This, it seems, is the importance of the guild-like structure of certain sorts of knowledge and skills on Ponam. The formal restrictions on them appear to remove them from the pressures of the informal exchange system.

Other sorts of practical knowledge which are used on Ponam complicate this picture, however, and I want to look at two of them briefly: outboard motor repair and sewing. There are several outboard motors on the island, and repair would seem a useful skill. However, there seems little enthusiam for learning repair techniques. Many Ponam men have learnt basic servicing, and the few working motors are serviced by either their owners or their owners' children. Thus, unlike dish repair, there is little demand for this service, and what demand exists can be met within the families of the owners. It seems to be the case, moreover, that with one exception, a young man who was temporarily back from the University of Tecnology in Lae at the time of fieldwork, Ponams were not formally taught what skills they have. Rather, these appear to have been picked up relatively informally in practical situations on Ponam and elsewhere. Major repairs are beyond Ponams' competence, often because they lack the special tools and spare parts such repairs involve, and if they have the money, islanders send their motors to Lorengau. Here lack of material as well as social factors inhibit islanders. Spare parts often are out of stock in Lorengau, and it would be unrealistic to expect anyone to try to keep them on hand on Ponam, where the demand for them is much less. Thus, major repairs involving real expense can not be made on the island. On the other hand, maintenance and adjustment of motors, requiring little or no expense, can be done by most people with motors and they have learnt the necessary skills mostly by example and practice.

Sewing presents a different pattern. While many of the younger women on Ponam were taught sewing at the Technical School at Bundralis, many who do sew were not. In any event, the skill is widespread, as is the ownership of sewing machines, though I can present no exact figures. Ponam women do not sew for each other. Rather, sewing seems to have been absorbed into the general domestic handiwork skills that women are supposed to have in order to care for their families, and most women have them. While the young women's club says it will do sewing for money, in fact, if they do so, they do very little.

These examples suggest, then, two things. First, the knowledge to be introduced should be introduced through several people at once, so that the demand on any one individual is reduced. Second, if it is intended that the knowledge will be the basis of a business, it should be presented in such a way that it is itself seen to be set apart from the system of informal exchange. Some sort of certificate or licensing suggests itself. But doing this, of course, will put pressure on Ponam social practices, and ideals. And islanders themselves are quite aware of this. While they want economic development of the sort that knowledge-based small business could bring, equally they see this as something which would weaken the equality and reciprocity that now exist, qualities of which they are quite proud. In short, while they want the benefits of business, they fear that its coming would separate islanders from each other, threatening the stability and honour that they value.

These two suggestions are not meant to be definitive. Rather, my intent has been to pick out some of the factors which seem to affect the introduction of useful knowledge to Ponam society. Any serious effort at such introduction on Ponam, or anywhere else, requires a much more detailed study than I have provided here. And it requires a careful consideration of the general nature of the society involved. Giving people useful knowledge is not enough. In a place like Ponam the knowledge is there already. Orienting that knowledge and the education that goes with it towards village life is not enough. Ponam Islanders are quite concerned with the welfare of the community, and are quite aware which knowledge is useful. Rather, it is the nature of the receiving society which requires the greatest care and attention. The society has to be such that 'useful knowledge' can in fact be used. If that knowledge is not used, it is most likely because people in the society are much more aware of the strain and costs which the use of that knowledge would involve than are those with a naive and one-sided view who see knowledge as a simple solution to the technical needs of an ignorant society.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

In this Research Report I have described various ways that Ponam Islanders understand and deal with the formal education that the government of Papua New Guinea offers them. Generally I have limited myself to description and avoided any substantial theoretical analysis of the topic. Thus, I have described what I have been able to discover about the social and economic history of Ponam, and to a lesser degree Manus Province. Briefly, I showed that colonial and post-colonial forces have combined with the island's own resources and social practices to deny Ponams any real opportunity to survive at any acceptable level through production of either subsistence goods or commodities. They survived before colonisation through participation in the region's system of production and circulation of goods, but once this disappeared Ponams had nothing available to take its place. Their land and sea are not productive enough to allow substantial commodity production, and their social organisation does not lend itself to that sort of activity.

Instead, as I showed in Chapter 3, Ponam's survival both materially and socially depends upon labour migration and remittances. And in turn the success of this style of dependence is based on access to and success in formal education. I have not dealt with the reasons for that success at any length. I do however, think it is appropriate to mention two reasons briefly.

The first of these is a consequence of historical accident. Success at education is a relative thing, and one of the reasons Ponam and Manus children have been so successful in school is that Manus had schools much earlier than most parts of Papua New Guinea, and is quite well provided with schools today (King and Ranck 1982). This has given the region a competitive advantage over much of the rest the rest of the country. Gradually, however, this advantage is disappearing, as other areas catch up in terms of educational provision (though the recent opening of a third high school in the province suggests that Manus is trying to maintain its advantage). As this advantage disappears, so too will the security of access to well-paid jobs, as well as remittances. The exact consequences of this are difficult to foresee, but given the geographical isolation of Manus and its lack of natural resources, those consequences seem certain to be unpleasant.

The second of these reasons is psychological: the abilities of Ponam children, and their movitation - their willingness to work hard at getting an education. From time to time in this report I have put forward suggestions about why they are so highly motivated, suggestions which refer back to social values and practices present on Ponam, and the social and economic situation in which they exist. I have, on the other hand, completely avoided any reference to the abilities of Ponam children, which clearly are at least adequate to deal with the education they are offered. Likewise, I have avoided speculating about why these children have the abilities they do.

I avoided this more psychological side of education and Ponam Islanders for a number of reasons. Partly this is because I did no research on their abilities. Research was undertaken by others and reported elsewhere (see especially Lancy 1978, 1981, 1983). However, a more important reason is that I wanted to emphasise a point which I made in the introductory chapter in this report, that a sociological approach to education is a quite fruitful one for those concerned with both the practical and the academic understanding of education in Papua New Guinea. Clearly, children whose abilities are better suited to the school's curriculum will do better than those whose abilities are not as well suited, all other things being equal. However, seldom if ever are all other things, or even all significant things, equal, especially in a country as diverse as Papua New Guinea. The reason I ignored this psychological dimension of education is the same one that led me to ignore curricular and other more institutional aspects of education: the desire to show the strength and explanatory power of those 'other things' that are not equal, the more purely social aspects of education.

The overwhelming social fact for Ponam is its dependence on education, migration, and remittance. Neither in Papua New Guinea nor in many other parts of the world is some degree of reliance on remittances unusual. However, the extreme reliance Ponam places on remittance does seem uncommon, and hence to some degree is worth documenting for its own sake. More important for the purposes of this report, however, is the fact that this reliance influences quite strongly and in many different ways the manner Ponams deal with education, though it is important to remember that neither islanders' relations with education, nor their society as a whole, can be reduced to or explained totally in terms of this remittance dependence. Likewise, it should not be assumed that other societies in Papua New Guinea and their relations with education can be explained in whole, or even in large part, solely by reference to their degree of remittance dependence. Other approaches may be more useful with other societies, and indeed in many cases non-economic approaches may be more useful than economic ones. However, I have focused on the objective economic position of Ponam in this report because that position is so striking and so clearly related to education.

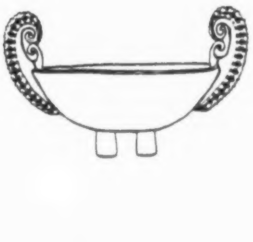
Although I have paid most attention to describing the historical appearance and present nature of Ponam's remittance dependency, this is not the only social factor affecting the ways islanders deal with education. Other beliefs, values, and social practices are important as well. (I believe, by the way, that remittance dependence influences strongly many of these other social factors, even though the desire to keep this report fairly brief and simple has prevented me from demonstrating this influence.) The second part of this report concentrated on some of these other important factors, though some others of them appeared in the first part as well.

The one factor which was most important in the second part of this report was the way Ponams perceive knowledge and learning. In their rather different ways, the last two chapters in this report showed how this perception exists in the more traditional sphere of Ponam life (their system of kinship and exchange, and the ways they explain success and failure in it), the way this perception has been extended to cover success and failure in school work itself, and the ways that this perception influences the ways that school knowledge and those who possess it are viewed. In the first part of this report, on the other hand, I described how differences in the ways Ponams perceive men and women - their sons and daughters - affect their decisions about who goes on to secondary school and who does not. All of these factors, as well as the others I have mentioned in this report, need to be taken into account in any effort to understand how Ponams treat education and why they do so. A reliance on narrower cognitive, psychological, curricular, or other pedagogical approaches simply is inadequate.

I said earlier in these concluding remarks that I have limited myself mostly to describing education and Ponam society, and that I have avoided any extensive theoretical discussion. I do not mean by this avoidance that a discussion of theories relating to the topics with which this reports is concerned would not be useful. Rather, I have avoided theory largely because this report, though I hope it has an academic audience, must ultimately try to address those who, correctly or otherwise, feel that any abstract discussion would be of little use in dealing with their practical educational concerns. While I think that this view of the applicability of social theory to practical educational problems errs to some extent, at the same time I think it is accurate to some extent. While theories of the sort I mean would help those whose concern with education is practical, they would not do so without an extensive discussion of what those theories mean and how to apply them. Sociological theories, like all theories, are like a language in which a great deal can be said in very few words. However, as is the case with any strange language, those who do not understand it see only its difficulties and none, or few, of its advantages. Thus, I have avoided discussions of sociological theory, in the hope that a demonstration of sociological practice will persuade readers of the usefulness, indeed the necessity, of taking into account the social aspects of education.

This report, then, is intended as a demonstration of the social nature of education, and of the need to approach education socially. I have made this demonstration by way of a case study, a presentatian of one particular society in Papua New Guinea. Although I have restricted myself to a description of Ponam Island, this report offers more than just knowledge of one of the hundreds of societies which make up this country. First, although it is quite unlikely that any place is exactly like Ponam, it has certain features in certain combinations which may appear elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. Most notable among these is Ponam's lack of a local productive base. As I have shown in this report Ponams find it extremely difficult to produce locally the things they need to survive or the wealth needed to buy these things. This is the basic problem of survival islanders face, and their reliance on education, migration, and remittance is the basic way they cope with this problem. This suggests that we should look to see if there are other societies facing similar survival problems and adopting similar survival strategies. This could be done either through original research, or through the use of existing research studies.

Although the study of Ponam is intended to be useful in itself as a report on one village's response to education, it also shows, as do other studies of this nature, the need for a broad, comparative study of the sociology of education in Papua New Guinea. Only thorough such comparison can we reach a general understanding of the place of education in this country.



APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 1

This Appendix lists all the articles identified as falling into the different categories of sociological research on education mentioned in this chapter. For each article I list the surname of all authors, year of publication, and the volume and issue number.

Category I: Socio-cultural studies: Cooke 1965 (3:2); Johnson 1965 (3:3); Mead 1968 (5:4); Abijah & Wright 1968 (5:4); McNamara 1970 (6:4); Prince 1970 (6:5); Bulmer 1971 (7:1); Randall 1974 (10:1); Bullivant 1975 (11:2); Strathern 1977 (13:1); Cheetham 1978 (14); Kettenis 1978 (14); Pumuye 1978 (14); Smith 1978 (14); Thune 1978 (14); Maddock 1980 (16:1).

Category II: Student attitude studies: Armstrong & Wetherall 1969 (6:3); Hicks 1970 (6:5); Thomas 1971 (7:3); Conroy 1972 (8:3); Young 1973 (9:1); Price 1973 (9:3); Shelley 1976 (12:1); Shea and Jones 1976 (12:2); Young 1977 (13:1); Young & Bartos 1977 (13:2).

Category III: Student demographic studies: Kearney 1969 (6:3); Brown 1969 (6:3); Smith 1971 (7:1); Eassie & Coyne 1974 (10:2); Mannan 1975 (11:1); Cayago 1979 (15); Sheret 1979 (15); Sheret 1980 (16:2); Kember 1980 (16:2).

Category IV: Professional studies: Kay 1971 (7:1); Henry 1972 (8:1); Larking 1973 (9:3); White 1974 (10:1); Weeks 1977 (13:2); Wohlberg 1979 (15); Wilson 1979 (15); Smith, Carss & Power 1979 (15).

Category V: Interaction of school and society: Neve 1971 (7:3); Smith 1972 (8:2); Smith 1975 (11:2); Welsh 1976 (12:2); Carrier 1979 (15); Cheetham 1979 (15); Carrier 1980 (16:2).

Category VI: School leaver studies: Wilson 1972 (8:2); Young 1972 (8:2); Thomas 1972 (8:3); Wilson 1973 (9:2); Harris 1973 (9:2); Young 1973 (9:3); Wilson 1976 (12:1).

Category VII: External debates and studies: Dart 1971 (7:2); Sheehan 1972 (8:2); Rosenthal 1973 (9:1); Coyne 1973 (9:1); Price 1976 (12:2); Lancy 1977 (13:1); Apelis 1980 (16:1).

Category VIII: Miscellaneous: Coyne 1973 (9:3); Coyne 1974 (10:1); Dunkin 1977 (13:2); McNamara 1980 (16:1).

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2

Examples of ranks assigned to migrants' jobs

1) plantation worker, cargo carrier
2) trochus diver, factory hand
3) ship's crew, fisherman, malaria control officer
4) police and Defence Force private, domestic servant
5) store clerk, all drivers, all self-employed
6) primary school teacher, police and Defence Force NCO
7) patrol officer, secondary school teacher
8) hotel manager, provincial radio station manager
9) middle level public service
10) senior level public service, ordained priest

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